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# shah abdul latif

*seeking the beloved*

TRANSLATED BY ANJU MAKHIJA & HARI DILGIR



# SHAH ABDUL LATIF SEEKING THE BELOVED

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# **SHAH ABDUL LATIF SEEKING THE BELOVED**

Translated from the Sindhi  
by Anju Makhija and Hari Dilgir



*For Vishendevi Narayandas*



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## **SEEKING THE BELOVED**

### **THE POETRY OF SHAH ABDUL LATIF**

**SEEKING THE BELOVED** presents selected verse from the *Shah Jo Risalo*<sup>1</sup> of Shah Abdul Latif of Bhittai, the celebrated sixteenth century sufi poet. This is the first comprehensive translation to appear in English from India.

Latif's unique treatment and allegorical interpretations of common folk tales, like Sasui-Punhoon, are truly relevant in today's atmosphere of religious strife. The sufis, as is known, were great integrators and Latif's poetry draws freely from both Islamic and Vedantic traditions.

Latif's verse, which is heard frequently in the voices of well-known singers, finds renewed creative energy in this translation. This volume includes an introduction by the renowned sufi scholar Padmashree Dr Motilal Jotwani.

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<sup>1</sup> The compiled verses of Shah Abdul Latif are called *Risalo*, which means message. These verses are recorded from the collection of verses known as *Ganj*, which is preserved at the mausoleum of the saint-poet.

## **INTRODUCTION**

**Dr Motilal Jotwani**

**Shah Abdul Latif** (1689-1752) has been aptly called the people's poet, revered alike by the elite and the common folk. He remains one of the greatest sufi poets in history along with Rumi (1207-1273) and Mir Dard (1721-1785). Often chanted in spiritual séances, Latif's poems have an immediate emotional appeal. They are about love for humanity and depict the seeker's direct relationship with the Supreme instead of a particular religious group looking for scriptural instructions and injunctions.

His verses are recited today as they have been for more than two hundred and fifty years. An Urs is held annually at Bhitshah in Sindh, Pakistan, where the poet spent the final years of his life and was later buried in a beautiful mausoleum. His disciples and followers from all over the world gather to celebrate and sing his verse.

Shah Abdul Latif was born in Hala, Sindh, in a notable Sayid family. He was of average height, with a strong build, possessing gentle manners. His dress code was simple like a sanyasi. Some of his clothes are preserved in Bhitshah to this day.

The poet's lifetime witnessed many historical events, the major being the transfer of power from the Mughal to the Kalhoro rule; but Shah Abdul Latif had little

interest in politics. His life was poetry personified and his poetry recorded his experiences: both constituting an organic whole. He authored a major work, *Shah Jo Risalo* which, according to most sources has thirty suras. It can be described as one long wail of firaq or separation from God. The *Risalo* is not a philosophical treatise like the Upanishads, but it does propound the doctrine of advaita or non-dualism.

As the story goes, Latif's disciples put together a volume from memorized verses and showed it to him. The poet, it is said, threw it into the lake for fear of being misunderstood. But later, he himself ensured that the verses were recompiled properly. The *Risalo* was preserved at the mausoleum of the saint-poet in 1754. Later, the scholar, Ernest Trumpp, published it in Germany in 1866. Subsequently, there was a mausoleum edition which has been in the British museum since 1844. Dr HM Gurbaxani, Dr HT Sorley, Kalyan Advani and Dr Annemarie Schimmel were among the renowned scholars who have worked on interpretations of the *Risalo*. Since then, others have written innumerable books on Latif, and a few translations have also been done in Pakistan. This volume by Hari Dilgir and Anju Makhija represents the first poetic transcreation of Latif's selected work in English in India.

~

Shah Abdul Latif was part of the bhakti movement which had a major impact in Sindh through the spread of Guru Nanak's teachings. Qazi Qadan, Shah Karim and Sachal Sarmast were some of the other well-known poets belonging to this tradition.

Indian sufism uses the imagery of romantic and conjugal love to depict the bond between God and man. This has been used as the basic metaphor for understanding spiritual life. Kabir says,

*Rama is my husband,  
I am his little bride.*

Like Kabir, Shah Latif assumes the role of the female protagonist of popular folk tales. He becomes Sasui, Moomal, Sohini and experiences the pangs of separation from God. Punhoon, Rano and Mehar personify beauty in his poetry.

It was in Shah Latif's poetry that Indian sufism, which drew its inspiration from the Vedanta, found full expression. Like Bhakti Yoga, it was based on complete surrender to God with the ultimate goal of union. All forms of dogma and authority were rejected. The sufi poets stood for sartorial freedom, and used the language of the masses.

The mystical union of man with God is depicted by Latif allegorically in many suras. In the tale of Sasui-Punhoon, the two come together after Sasui, the seeker,

has crossed innumerable hurdles in search of her lover. Finally, she tastes the universal essence of love. Latif speaks to us in Sasui's voice,

*As I turned inwards and conversed with my soul,  
there was no mountain to surpass,  
no Punhoon to look for,  
I myself became Punhoon!  
Only as Sasui  
did I experience grief.*

Sasui reaches a state where Ketch, Punhoon's native place, and Bhambore, her own village, are reconciled as the One Original Abode.

Realization is possible only by becoming one with the object of realization. In this case knowledge is not in the form, "I know this" but "I am this." Realization is an intimate knowledge in the form of, "I am Brahma" or "I am Huqq." If one living does not know the self, then there is endless misery in the form of birth, old age and death. One who "dies" before death, or while alive, and gives no consideration to the external body, becomes liberated. Shah Abdul Latif says,

*Those who die before death,  
never will be destroyed by dying.*

In the tale of Moomal-Rano, Moomal, the seeker, satisfies her desire of being with her lover by sleeping with

her sister, who is clad in a man's attire. When Rano comes to her palace, he mistakes her sister for a man and leaves abruptly. Moomal comes to know of this, and exclaims, "I shall die without you." After much remorse and introspection her mind eventually becomes still, like the flame of a lamp by which she waits for her true self to emerge.

Liberation, another name for realization, comes to Moomal now. She is free from the bondage of body and mind; it is a stage of non-distinction. She sees everything in herself and herself in everything. She is the entire world and the entire world is her:

*Where should I drive the camel?*

*All around is His glory;*

*Kaak's palace is within me!*

There is nothing but peace, nothing but Rano everywhere. Moomal achieves a union without beginning or end. Moomal gives up attachment with her "person," conscious of Rano in herself and thus realizes Turiya or the Truth, and Shanti.

In the allegorical tale of Sohini-Mehar, Sohini, the seeker, undergoes many hardships in order to meet her lover, Mehar. Their love faces much community opposition. Every night Sohini crosses a mighty river with the help of a baked pot to meet him on the opposite bank. The two are finally united in death. Sohini becomes one with Mehar,

one with God, allegorically. The term istighraq defines her state. Like Mansur, she is no more the abd, servant, she is Allah herself. One who says anna l'abd, I am the servant of God, supposes duality – the existence of God and his own. But he who says ana l-Huqq, I am the Truth, affirms the Oneness of existence. Sohini says:

*If you were to see Mehar's face but once,  
you would no longer sleep comfortably  
beside your husband.  
You would pick up the jar,  
and plunge into the river!*

The Upanishads refer to the nature of the Absolute as neti, not this. The Absolute is undefinable. This is the essence of advaita, the philosophy of non-dualism, propounded by Sankaracharya.

~

In Shah Latif's Sur Ramkali, which is inspired by the lives of yogis, shanti or the experienced peace is inexpressible.

*Where there is no heaven, no trace of earth,  
where the moon and the sun neither rise, nor descend,  
that far the yogis have set their tryst with the Supreme.  
They see the Lord in Nothingness.*

This stage is similar to the one in Kath Upanishad:

*Where neither sun, moon, nor stars shine,  
Where lightning does not strike.*

Shah Latif longs for the constant company of the yogis in whom he sees divine qualities, and with whom he travelled far and wide in India.

*Take advantage of their presence,  
be with them and enrich your experience,  
soon they'll go on a journey to distant lands,  
leave this world of pleasures and reach the holy Ganga.*

Sur Ramkali makes it clear that a part of Shah Latif's heritage is derived from the traditions of the Nath sampradaya. However, Latif did not favour mere physical practice of sadhana without bhakti. As such, there is no reference in his poetry to the entire method of penance practiced by the Nath panthis. His is the bhavatmak rahasyavada, mysticism with devotion as its basis, and not the sadhanatmak, that is mysticism based on yogic postures. For Latif, yogis are spiritual beings, who stay away from physical pleasures. They hear the subtle sound pervading the universe, the non-struck sound or the Anahata nada,

*They wear loin cloth and need no ablutions,  
they hear the subtle call  
that sounded before the advent of Islam.  
They sever all ties and meet their guide, Gorakhnath.*

The Anahata nada, or sabda, in its ultimate sense is like the sound Om. The mula mantra of the Jap-Ji by Guru Nanak, who is popularly described as a guru of the Hindus and a pir of the Muslims, opens with the highest mystical syllables, Ek Omkar Sat-Nam, Kartar and Purkha. Shah Latif also says:

*Constantly contemplate on these words,  
the cure for all your misery:  
Keep meem in your mind  
and put alif before it.*

The reference here is to both Om, which when written in the Arabic script, begins with the letter alif and ends with the meem and Muhammad – after – Allah (meem refers to Muhammad, alif to Allah).

Shah Latif had stayed in the company of the wandering yogis, believing in the unity of being. Sankaracharya's advaita and the sufi's Wahdah al-wujud are strikingly similar in their metaphysical quest.

~

Shah Latif was attracted to spiritual life from his childhood. Contemplative by nature, he shunned worldly comforts and remained more or less in isolation. It is said that when he was taught the alphabet at the age of six, he refused to go beyond the alif which stands for Allah.

Latif followed his father, Sayyid Shah Habib's advice and

rose to be a learned man of his times. He had mastery over his mother tongue, Sindhi, and also knew Arabic, Persian and Hindi along with other languages. The *Risalo* shows that he had studied the Quran and Vedantic traditions and internalized them through personal observation and experiences. Quran in Arabic, Rumi's *Mathnavi* in Persian and Shah Abdul Karim's baits, in Sindhi were Latif's constant companions.

When Latif was about twenty, he visited the ailing daughter of Mirza Mughal Beg who was a descendant of Chengiz Khan. Latif was struck by the young woman's beauty, and holding her little finger said, "one whose finger is in Sayyid's hand need fear no fall."

Mirza Mughal Beg did not approve of the young poet's words, and forced the Sayyids to leave Kotri and relocate to Haweli.

This separation made Shah Latif restless. One day, he left home without informing his parents, and joined a group of yogis and sanyasis and travelled with them for three years, through Sindh, Gujarat and Rajasthan. This exposure widened his outlook and understanding of Hinduism. The insight he gained helped him to create poetry inspired by the immortal characters of Sasui, Marui, Sohini and other folk heroines. What Sasui experiences while plodding through the hot sands of the Thar was a part of Latif's own journey.

When Shah Latif was twenty three, Mirza Mughal Beg lost his life in an armed encounter with robbers. The women of the family attributed this misfortune to the displeasure of the Sayyids. They offered Mirza's daughter's hand to Latif and thus he won her in the end.

Latif's life thereafter was simple and was spent mainly in contemplation and poetry. People would come from distant places to listen to him. Latif built an entire village with his disciples on a sandhill in Bhitai, where he spent the rest of his days with his family.

Before his death in 1752, he confined himself in an underground room for about three weeks and spent all his time in prayers. When he came out, he bathed and covered himself with a white sheet and asked his disciples to play music. After three days they discovered that Latif had left his body. He was buried at the same place where his mausoleum still stands.

~

Latif's renderings reflected his environment: the landscape of Sindh, which is now part of Pakistan. Deserts, sand dunes, trees and flowers; falcons, vultures, ducks, cuckoos, partridges and a host of other local motifs appear in *Risalo*, sometimes in their natural hues and occasionally in the poet's imaginative representations.

Latif's poetry was considered non-metrical according

to rigid canonical standards. Some even called it “rustic.” Latif was a folk-poet, who did not limit himself to the rules of prosody. The folk-poets experimented with the doha which was used in other literary Indian traditions such as Braj and Rajasthani. Latif made a structural change in the doha in which the first and fourth, or the second and third hemistich, ended in rhyme:

*Laharunni lakha libaasa pani pasanu hekiro,  
oonhe tahin ameeqa jee, vaare chaadi vimaasa,  
Kaatee tikhee ee ma thie, maru muniyaee hoi,  
maana virmanni toi, mooni priyaan jaa hathiraa.*

(*Waves have many a vesture, but water is One.*

*In the deep sea, there is no duality.*

*Let the knife be sharp, let my beloved’s hands  
remain longer on my neck.)*

The waee form comes at the end of every sur as a finale. It begins with a thalh or refrain with the rhyme generally at the end. Usually there are five verses ending with the same rhyme, and after every verse, the refrain is repeated.

For example:

*mandhu peeande moon, saajanu sahee sunjaato,  
mandhu peeande moon ...  
pee piyalo ‘ishq jo, sabhukee samajhya-soon,  
mandhu peeande moon ...*

*(Having tasted the wine, we recognized our beloved,  
Having tasted the wine ...  
We drank a goblet of love we understood everything,  
Having tasted the wine ...)*

~

Shah Latif's poetry is metrical, but adapted to song. The sufi poets sang out their baits and sometimes a short vowel was lengthened or a long vowel shortened for rhythm. Latif's music drew upon the classical and the folk and includes songs, ballads and devotional verses.

Unlike in classical raags or melodies, the cadence of Shah Latif's surs are based on words and meanings of the baits and waees. They are basically musical renderings expressed through the rhythm and melody of words in contrast to classical music which is expressed by the rhythm and melody of sound.

During the days of Shah Latif, the tambura had four strings. He introduced one more string adjacent to the zuban or outer string, tuned as sa, shadaj, of the tar saptak, seven tones, in a conventional style. When the music begins, the melody of the new sur is spelled out at the very start, and thereafter when the vocal performance of the waee composition ascends, the rhythmic beats on the tambura with the right hand of the performer provide the necessary taal. Shah Latif's purpose was to simplify the complicated technique of the taal and therefore he devised

only two basic taals, which he called the dedhi (the 1.5 time) and the du-tali (the double time).

Shah Latif sang his baits in Sindhi in an age when Arabic was the language of the Quran, and Persian the court language.

~

To appreciate the technicalities and beauty of Latif's surs, one has to hear them in the original and there are many versions available of the same.

The German scholar, Dr Annemarie Schimmel, Pakistani poet Shaikh Ayaz and Prof Kalyan Advani worked extensively on Latif's poetry and sufism in their lifetimes. I am indebted to them for keeping alive the tradition of Shah Abdul Latif.

I am especially happy that Anju Makhija has joined hands with Sindhi poet, Hari Dilgir, to provide contemporary readers with a rendering in free verse that captures the very spirit and essence of Shah Latif's surs. It's a work of perseverance and embodies an Indianess not found in previous translations. That Shah Latif belongs to both India and Pakistan, Hindus and Muslims, is indisputable. In fact, he belongs to the whole world, to humanity itself.

## TRANSLATORS' NOTES

### Anju Makhija

The idea of translating *Shah Jo Risalo* first took root in my mind when I attended a literary conference in Adipur, Kutch. My interest was kindled when speaker after speaker touched upon the greatness of the sufi poet Shah Abdul Latif, addressing him as the “Shakespeare of Sindh” and as a link between Hindus and Muslims. I was told that the original *Risalo*, the compiled works of Latif, was in Adipur and a copy preserved in the Museum of London. I also learned that scholars like Dr Ernest Trumpp had done extensive work on the saint-poet, as had several Sindhi academics and writers. However, Latif’s work had been largely ignored by Indo-English scholars and a comprehensive translation had not been attempted in India. Many considered it an almost impossible task as his poetry was extremely lyrical and replete with alliterations and puns. He ingeniously combined strands of Islamic thought and Persian mystical poetry with Indian folk tales and songs.

The decision to translate Latif’s work was rather spontaneous. I felt that he was not only part of my Sindhi heritage but belonged to millions of others around the world who had chosen the path of sufism in this age of disharmony. When fundamentalism and other “isms” throttle, and human folly triumphs, the direct approach

of the sufis can point the right way there. However, that too has its hurdles, I was to learn. When the sufi poet, Mansur, stated, “I am God” emphasizing the oneness between God and man, he was stoned to death. To seek the divine without the support of established religion, was considered blasphemy.

~

I began my work by reading essays and books by Indian, Pakistani and foreign scholars. However, a simple statement, made by one of the delegates at the Adipur conference, provided me with the anchor I needed. The statement – “Latif is Love” was singularly simple, but it gave me the strength to undertake a seemingly daunting task. Of course, without the collaboration of Hari Dilgir, not a word could have been written. His knowledge of Latif’s poetry, his mastery of the “old” Sindhi with its sprinkling of Arabic and Persian words, his poetic abilities and sense of discipline were astonishing.

When the Kutch earthquake took its toll, and part of Dilgir’s house was destroyed, he moved to Ahmedabad but continued sending translations of Shah’s work. I have no hesitation in saying that I have learnt as much about sufism by associating with Dilgir as I have from Latif’s poetry. The process itself became a prayer. We communicated so frequently that the distance between

Mumbai and Kutch seemed to vanish. Looking back, it almost seemed like the spirit of Latif was with us. Working on this translation paved the way for my own spiritual search.

Latif's *Risalo* has often been described as one long "wail of separation." The lover, without his beloved, or the seeker without God, merely drifts through the ocean of life. Latif's work, although rich in similes and metaphors, allusions to Persian, Arabic, Indian and Islamic traditions, ultimately touches the core of one's being. The reader enters the realms of sufism not by abstract and ambiguous concepts but, more often than not, by concrete illustrations from popular folk tales which serve as spiritual allegories. Shah Latif chose the unassuming way of the fakir in both his life and poetic expressions.

~

We found that previous translations in English indulged in effusive language, perhaps in an attempt to "romanticize" his poetry. Some were even take-offs on the original, often elaborating on realms briefly mentioned in the *Risalo*. Having said this, as most translators know, the process itself can be tedious. Attempting to take someone else's voice, and filtering it through one's own, is not an easy task. Loyalty to the original is required as well as meaningful resonance in the target language. Dealing with ancient text

compounds the problem. The words must be “reborn” at a sub-conscious level, even as the logical process of structuring and editing continues.

A K Ramanujan’s translation from the Tamil to English in *Speaking of Shiva* helped us define both visual and structural parameters as did Dilip Chitre’s translation of Tukaram in *Says Tuka*. However, in the end, each translation stands on its own feet, defined by the work, and emerging from the style and content of the original.

Ramanujan has aptly pointed out:

“A translation has to be true to the translator no less than to the original. He cannot jump off his own shadow. Translation is choice, interpretation, assertion, of taste ...”

~

We have followed Kalyan Advani’s highly respected Sindhi version of the *Risalo* and provided page and verse numbers to facilitate easy reference. While most are as per the original, in some cases, the sequence has been changed to make the material more accessible to readers. Over the years, the original version of the *Risalo* itself has undergone change by those who compiled and translated Shah’s surs. In our research, we found that the process still continues. We hope our translation of Advani’s version will provide links for further translations.

Shah’s *Risalo* is divided into thirty surs or musical

compositions based largely on classical Indian raags. These are presented in two to four lines called baits, often followed by a longer poem called Waee, more popularly known as Kaafi in Sindh, Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat. The Kaafi is usually sung with one singer reciting a verse with the second singer responding; back and forth it goes, rising to great emotional heights. The baits are performed in two ways i.e. in sanhoon or a thin, low voice and graham or a thick, high-pitched voice.

We have translated practically all the thirty surs of the *Risalo*. The verses were selected on the basis of literary value, thematic variation and those that accentuated Shah's beliefs. We stayed close to the language of the original and tried to wed the "old" Sindhi with the "newness" of modern English poetry. The line arrangements adhere to Latif's verse as far as possible. However, it was impossible to keep to meter and rhyme pattern and we chose to do a rendering in free verse. Some lines, which may be termed as cliches today, are found in Latif's verse. We decided to leave them for when they were written in the original, hundreds of years ago, they were certainly not fatigued phrases. We have tried to include the favourites, so to speak, which are quoted in everyday conversations and sung by disciples with the same frenzy as one would attempt a pop song, with dance and music all through the night.

As many of Latif's surs are allegories, based on folk stories, these have been provided. The readers will find it useful to familiarize themselves with the stories before reading the verse. Shah occasionally tends to get weighed down under a particular idea, and the reader, who finds this repetition jarring is reminded that, as with a scene shot from different angles, Latif tries to make us see the same subject from various viewpoints, in order to arrive at a point of truth. In readings and at musical gatherings, the rhythmic repetition is particularly enjoyable.

Today, sufi music has the world clapping to its beat. Shah Latif's voice, powerful yet subtle, has for centuries reflected the ancient wisdom of the Indus Valley civilization and the way of life of the common folk. Now, centuries later, I am grateful to be a part of it all.

## **Hari Dilgir**

I have always thought the art of translation more difficult than creating a piece of writing. In the latter, the author can give expression to feelings, thoughts, inspirations and aspirations. The author is at liberty to present the same in a language and style of her/his own. The translator, on the other hand loses out on this freedom having to stick to the framework of the original. Consequently, the translator has to fit into an alien environment.

Translating poetry is an even more difficult task. The greater the poet, the more difficult the translator's job. For such a poet identifies not merely with her/his people and immediate surroundings, but also with the ethics and ethos of her/his times. Shah Abdul Latif was not only the greatest poet of Sindh, but its very soul.

Words are more than mere expressions of the writer's thought process. They represent the culture, philosophy, moral values, opinions and ideals of the ethnic community to which the poet belongs. It's practically impossible to present the colloquialism of one language into another. A translator is bound to make some changes and colour the original with variations of the new language. Alterations in syntax, omissions and additions become unavoidable.

Shah's poetry has been described as narrative, dramatic and lyrical. At times, it's also moralistic and didactic in tone. But it is in the lyricism that he excels.

Music flows from his words and his poems abound in meaningful alliteration.

Dr H T Sorely in his book *Musa Pervagans* has rightly said that Shah is the greatest musical maestro of the world. He even goes to the extent of stating that Pakistan committed a blunder by declaring Mohamed Iqbal as the national poet of Pakistan. This honour should have gone to Shah Abdul Latif. Some scholars have made attempts at translating a few poems of Shah into English, Urdu, and Hindi, but these ventures have not been completely satisfactory, often due to the self-conscious use of rhymes in an attempt to match the lyrical quality of the original. Keeping this in mind, we have carefully selected only those poems which afforded effective translations in free verse. Latif's poetry is a garden of roses and we have tried to sift out the nectar.

Ours is a humble effort to bring to the readers the inimitable poetry of Shah Abdul Latif of Bhittai.

# Seeking the Beloved

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All line and verse numbers in this translation refer to Kalyan Advani's, *Shah Jo Risalo*. Bombay: Hindustan Kitab Ghar, 1958.

# Sur Kalyan



without beginning  
without end  
all knowing monarch  
of the universe  
omnipotent and benevolent  
the one and only  
lord  
  
utter his name  
sing his praises  
the ever compassionate  
creator of the cosmos

(1/1)

he is the one  
the only one  
cause of all causes  
  
if you accept this  
why pay obeisance to others?

(1/2)

the wise  
abide by the right  
never taking  
the wrong path

they alone  
unite with the lord

(1/5)

if you remember to repeat  
he is the one  
beyond comparison

you'll hear a voice whisper  
drink  
the sweet ambrosia

(2/11)

head  
no torso  
torso  
no head  
wrists  
hands cut  
those who seek him  
are slaughtered

(2/13)

listen  
ignorant one  
neither lover  
nor beloved  
neither creator  
nor creation  
is he  
this secret disclosed  
to seekers of perfection

(3/14)

the lord  
reflects his own image  
becomes his own beloved  
embraces his own creation

(3/17)

he is  
that  
this  
  
life  
death  
  
friend  
enemy

breath of breath

is he

(3/18)

one palace  
numerous doors  
as many windows

i see  
you  
everywhere  
in many ways

how should i describe  
your countless manifestations  
my lord?

(3/20&21)

all adore the lord  
eyes drink his nectar

he understands our minds  
eyes drink his nectar

latif's music pulsates with love  
eyes drink his nectar

(3/Waee)

ill health  
crucifying pain  
both sacred to me

my beloved  
worries  
about my well-being

(4/1)

will you  
follow me to the gallows  
my friend?

the gallows await those  
who seek the beloved

(4/3)

if your love  
is true  
first cut off  
your head  
lover  
do not return  
till you are beheaded

(4/4)

see them  
celebrate at the gallows  
an inspiring sight

why hesitate?  
why break your  
age-old vows with love?

come  
be butchered

(4/5)

up on the scaffold  
lovers do not quiver

behold  
eyes meet  
gallows turn into garlands

(4/6)

why blame the dagger  
when  
the butcher holds the handle?

the beloved's behavior  
causes even steel to quiver  
lovers are transformed

(5/11)

i pray  
for the dagger  
to be blunt  
  
let it linger  
a little bit longer  
in the beloved's hand

(5/12)

butcher  
possessor of daggers  
i hunt you out  
  
in love's slaughter-house  
i place my head on the block  
chop me to pieces  
my lord  
(5/16)

if you want love  
go to the tavern  
  
cut the head  
place it in the barrel  
drink brave one  
drown in the draught  
  
this lethal drink is cheap  
in exchange for the head  
(6/18))

just  
one sip  
of that priceless wine  
  
for  
just one sip  
they sacrifice life

(6/22)

intoxicated  
lovers revel  
in the poisonous drink  
drowning in the deadly venom  
  
pained by separation  
they hide bleeding wounds  
says latif

(6/23)

skull  
torso  
flesh  
all on fire  
all torn apart  
only those need speak of love  
who carry heads  
in their hands

(7/26)

drinking wine  
we behold sajan  
  
sipping from the goblet  
realization dawns  
  
drinking wine  
we behold sajan  
  
our worldly life  
is but a passing storm  
  
drinking wine  
we behold sajan  
you alone exist  
says latif  
  
(7/Waee)

first  
he awakens me  
then  
forsakes me  
i am  
stabbed  
wounded

how i hate the treatment  
of those physicians

(8/1)

no doctor can cure me  
my mentor has the remedy  
he alone knows the treatment  
to relieve me of this malady

(8/4)

rabab-like  
my veins throb  
but  
he remains silent  
  
my beloved butcher  
soothe me  
  
only you  
can pacify my soul  
  
(8/6)

why yearn for grace?  
why not pay respect?

his place  
once visited  
other destinations  
are a waste

(8/9)

accept  
his offerings  
sometimes  
they may taste bitter  
try again  
they will be palatable

(9/2)

you long for him  
he longs for you  
  
to remember  
and be remembered  
is the secret  
  
with honeyed words  
dagger in hand  
he comes to you

(9/13)

i  
heard the call  
just once  
  
his voice echoes  
throughout my life

(9/14)

he asked  
with a smile  
  
am i not your lord?

since that day  
pain crushes me

(9/15)

he calls  
then kills  
his killing  
is the calling

why fear the spear of love?  
in ecstasy forgo all  
embrace death

(9/17)

he calls  
then rejects  
his rejection  
is the calling

if separation is the opposite  
of union  
why lose hope?

(10/18)

he is my physician and medicine  
he will come to dispense compassion

he is my physician and medicine  
he will enquire about my case

he is my physician and medicine  
he will cure me of my ailments

sisters  
none equals him  
says latif  
(10/Waee)

# Sur Yaman Kalyan



you are my friend  
my physician

you bestow maladies  
and remedies

you alone can provide  
the medicine

(11/4)

the physician proposes  
beloved disposes

he stabs me  
with his knife

(11/5)

this wound  
i suffer silently  
  
if i shout  
the world will hear  
  
how can i tell them  
my friend has stabbed me?

(12/7)

your arrows  
laden with love  
render cures worthless  
physicians helpless

bodies ache  
bleed  
(12/9)

silently  
dressing their wounds

let us spend a night  
with these souls  
my friend

(12/13)

how can the healthy know  
the torment of the wounded?

unrelenting bodies  
lament night after night

(12/18)

to impress the world  
some shed tears

mother  
true lovers  
neither weep  
nor speak  
a single word

(13/20)

if you want to meet the loved one  
take a lesson from thieves

    alert through the night  
    stealthily they move  
    neither uttering a sound  
    nor fearing death

(14/8)

see  
those moths  
lovers of light  
annihilate themselves

if you want  
to be like a moth  
come  
burn the fire itself

the fire  
that devours many

(17/9&10)

moth-like  
you perish in the flame  
yet remain ignorant  
  
you cannot endure the blaze  
my friend  
  
(17/12)

his  
deadly  
eyes  
seek  
heads

for a mere sip  
of wine  
(20/5)

sit  
with the assassin  
watch  
him convert venom into nectar  
drink  
a few cups with him

(20/6)

winter beckons  
cup bearers  
offer a spread  
  
others come  
to offer their heads  
(20/10)

mokhi  
jugs  
bottles  
goblets  
  
fill your distillery  
despair not  
seekers are on their way

(21/17)

connoisseurs enjoy  
varied wines  
  
willingly they offer their heads  
for a taste of the divine  
says sayyad

(22/21)

the beloved has graced my abode  
a wonderful union it is  
after many days i have been favoured

the beloved has graced my abode  
a wonderful union it is  
i thought him far but he is near

the beloved has graced my abode  
a wonderful union it is  
god has been charitable  
says latif

(22/Waee)

unhappy  
is a sufi  
when he gets something

happy  
is a sufi  
with nothing

creedless  
is a sufi  
struggling with the self

casteless  
is a sufi  
befriending all

(23/3&4)

if you still possess  
desires  
how can you call  
yourself a sufi?

no  
this is not the way  
chop off the head  
throw it in the fire  
(23/6)

this  
world  
overflows  
with  
egos  
oblivious  
of the  
magician's  
sorcery

(23/9)

the beloved  
a sea of splendour

the world  
a gathering of solicitors  
says rumi

this secret  
once known  
seals the lips  
forever

(24/10)

the afflicted ones  
repeat sermons of suffering  
commune with the beloved  
day after day

(24/17)

alif  
is the beginning  
alif  
is the end  
why recite anything else?

i cannot proceed  
beyond the first line  
even this lesson  
not yet mastered

you alone are everything  
nothing else matters

(24/18&19)

azazeel is the true lover  
all others are immature

with profound love  
even the cursed  
    felt blessed

(25/24)

more  
they read  
    less  
they know

more  
pages turned  
    more  
sins committed

(25/27)

a glimpse of the beloved  
far better than fasts and prayers

kaatib  
why write so many pages?  
the source  
of all knowledge is just  
one letter  
(26/33)

why these places of worship  
why this constant fasting?  
know the alakh within  
he is everywhere  
(26/34)

your eyes  
shoot sharp arrows  
why this aggression  
this tyranny  
qabil  
(27/3)

if he showers arrows  
bare your breast  
stand erect before the gallows  
(28/8)

with arrows in your bow  
shoot me  
but beware  
my friend  
you are  
within me

you may strike yourself

(28/10)

beloved  
i stand where i was  
struck before  
  
favour me  
strike me once more

(28/12)

lover  
be a target  
in the battlefield of love  
utter not a word  
says sayyad  
  
let the arrow  
strike the heart  
  
(28/13)

with your blood boiling  
do not boast of love  
  
with a face pale  
pining heart  
barter your head  
  
(30/4)

frequent visits  
add to vanity  
  
incessant talk  
leads to ignorance  
  
learn to love him  
patiently  
  
your pain  
will turn to ecstasy  
(30/5)

when he invites you  
for a drink  
gulp like a camel  
  
none can enter  
uninvited  
(32/1)

a story  
untold  
no one knows

a story  
told  
may be misunderstood

this deep mystery  
unfolds for the fortunate  
the destined ones

(33/6&7)

accept fate at any cost  
never say he has forgotten me

if the connection breaks  
bridge it  
if your fate turns vile  
rejoice in it

cherish this friendship  
with humility

(33/9&10)

if the company is agonizing  
give it up  
even if immense wealth  
is at stake

if the company is constructive  
build a home there  
my friend  
(35/23&24)

## Sur Sorath



Sur Sorath is based on the following folk tale:

Rai Diach, King of Jhunagadh, was a great connoisseur of music and a philanthropist. He lived in a palace with his queen Sorath, daughter of King Anirai. Following a dispute, the latter attacked Rai Diach, but could not lay siege. So he announced that anyone who could bring Diach's head would be awarded a casket of gold, precious pearls and diamonds.

Beejal, a wandering minstrel knew of Rai Diach's love for music. He accepted King Anirai's offer and with his musical instruments – the chang and the surando – he reached Rai Diach's palace.

Beejal's music was truly melodious. The strings of his instruments were made from the dried intestines of a deer he had chanced upon in the forest.

Rai Diach was so enthralled that he called Beejal up to his palace and promised to give him whatever he desired. When Beejal demanded his head, the king was shocked and pleaded that he ask for something else. Beejal did not relent and the king, keeping his word, cut off his own head.

With the head, Beejal went to King Anirai, who regretting his decision, condemned the inhuman act. Beejal returned to Girnar where a pyre for Rai Diach was ready. Queen Sorath was about to jump into the fire. Beejal too, in violent fit of remorse, threw himself into the blaze.

In this story, Beejal is the mentor. Rai Diach, the disciple, gladly surrenders his head, symbolic of the ego.

adorning his chang  
uttering the lord's name  
he set forth  
  
seeing the palanquin  
he prayed: merciful god  
may my music please the monarch

(315/1)

sorath's groom  
monarch of great name and fame  
honour this simpleton  
who knows not how to beg  
  
charitable one  
why wait till dawn?  
fulfil my desire here and now

(315/5&6)

monarch  
i can tolerate  
neither heat nor cold  
but for you  
i'll play this lyre

listen  
this bard will be honoured  
with a mere spray of your saliva

(316/7&8)

with humility beejal played  
the music filled the palace

at the right moment  
the king shared his secret  
none could understand  
how two became one

(317/4)

not many could understand  
but at last a few unravelled  
the enigma

“i am man’s secret  
he is mine”

the king and the minstrel were united

(318/5)

i come with a begging bowl  
though i have never begged

i have many horses in my stable  
i cannot sing for a pittance

i do not care for a few elephants  
i have come for your precious head

(318/9)

day and night he demands heads  
sparing neither royalty nor pauper

they bow  
he exterminates

it pleases him immensely

(319/14)

beggar  
collector of heads  
may you never return

enough crowns  
have crumbled in the dust

(319/15)

early morning beejal played  
the king rejoiced hearing him

come up minstrel  
i'll throw treasures at your feet  
my head is but a guest  
in your hands  
let it rest

(320/1)

the bard entered the palace  
ready to take the head

junagadh would soon be in jeopardy  
all would mourn

(320/3)

**jaajik**

i pledge obeisance ten times  
what you demand has little value  
if you want i'll cut it twenty times  
said diach

(320/6)

**bard**

you have asked for nothing  
had you desired what i could not give  
it would have been a great insult  
for a philanthropist like me

(321/8)

for you  
i'll sacrifice my bones  
my body  
and even more  
  
bard  
leave quickly before you break  
your promise to anirai  
(321/9&10)

if i had a hundred heads  
i would cut one for each string  
  
if my head was put in the scale  
a single string would weigh less

bard  
this head does not befit you  
(321/12&13)

the bard's desire  
pleased the yadav king  
  
minstrel here is the head  
existence is in non-existence  
(321/18)

**chaaran**  
your chang and your music  
butchered me last night  
  
how do you play such melodious notes  
and still manage to stay alive?

(323/3)

**chaaran**  
your wish is my demand  
your strings more precious  
than my wife sorath  
  
**jaajik**  
come near tell me quickly  
shall I cut it off my shoulders  
or surrender it with the torso?

(323/6)

string  
dagger  
head

**all became one**

(324/10)

bard  
none like you has come before  
thank you for your request

the maestro played his lyre  
the music reached a crescendo

out came the dagger  
off went the head

(324/11)

girnar's flower plucked  
hundreds wept with sorath  
offering their heads they cried  
the king passed away last night

(324/12)

the city fell silent  
music faded  
sorath passed away  
the bard whispered the word  
the head lay content

(325/15&16)

## Sur Prabhati



your stringed instrument  
hangs on the wall  
still you fail to greet  
the golden dawn

who can call you a minstrel?

(449/1)

how can you sleep unfettered?

weep  
in the early hours  
weep

tomorrow  
your instrument will lie  
abandoned on the ground

(499/2)

dejected drummer  
what did you do yesterday?  
  
shameless fellow  
shun idleness  
beg the king for your reward  
  
(499/5)

the journey is long  
and the minstrel's song falters

king  
i plead for your blessings  
here and now  
(449/6)

he secretly favours  
simple souls  
if those experts come to know  
they'll destroy their instruments  
instantly  
(449/7)

experts are in abundance  
but what use is expertise?

tainted are all human deeds

you are paras  
i a piece of iron  
a mere touch i turn into gold

(450/8)

babbling  
he fell on the floor

the king carried him in the chariot  
honoured the innocent one

(450/12)

singing songs  
minstrels were at peace  
  
they knew not how and when  
the king would be pleased  
  
(450/16)

at midnight  
why did you not communicate with  
the lord?  
  
when he gave out treasures  
other minstrels filled their bowls  
to the brim  
  
(451/17)

the king reproached the beggar  
why did you move away from my door?

why did you approach others  
no wonder hard days have befallen

(451/18)

seeing the minstrel  
in tattered clothes  
the king summoned him

the wise realized  
he favours the downtrodden

(451/22)

you are the king

i am a beggar

you are the giver

i am a receiver

hearing your call

i pick up my instrument

ready to sing

(451/24)

you are the giver

your bounty has no seasons

a visit to my hamlet

would be a great honour

for an unkempt beggar like me

(452/26)

revere the morning star

sing for the lord

resentful is the king

when your mind

drifts away from him

(452/27)

## Leela Chanesar



King Chanesar Dasra, ruler of the Soomre dynasty, lived in the south of Sindh. He was extremely handsome and many women were attracted to him though he had a beautiful wife Leela.

Kaunroon, daughter of Rana Khangar, the ruler of Lakhpat, fell in love with King Chanesar, and vowed to win him over or commit suicide. After much planning, she decided to enter his palace as a maid.

One day, when Kaunroon was in the royal bedroom, she revealed her identity to Leela showing her the priceless necklace as a proof. Leela, who loved jewellery, desired it at any cost. Kaunroon promised to give it to her on a condition that she be allowed to sleep with the king for one night. Leela agreed reluctantly. One evening, when Chanesar was drunk, she asked Kaunroon to go to her spouse.

Early morning when the king woke up, he was shocked to see Kaunroon and even more shocked with her story. Offended at the shameless behaviour of his queen, he decided to abandon her and in revenge marry Kaunroon. Leela apologized and fell at his feet, but he did not relent.

Leela left the palace and went to stay with her parents. Her days were spent in solitude and repentance. Sometime later, King Chanesar was invited to attend a wedding of one of his ministers. It was at the same village where Leela's parents lived. Leela was among the dancers at the celebrations and, not realizing this, something prompted Chanesar to request her to remove the veil. The unexpected sight of his former wife, whom he still loved,

caused him to collapse. Seeing him, Leela too fell on the floor and died. The two souls were thus united forever in death.

This allegory highlights man's fall when he shifts his loyalty from the supreme to worldly possessions.

separation stings  
for god's sake  
my beloved  
forsake not this helpless being  
  
in your royal presence  
i'll burn  
this strand of strings  
  
i'll burn  
this strand of strings  
will it to hell  
  
reunion alone  
can redeem this tainted soul

(122/2)

chanesar jaam  
honoured king  
feared across the land  
the cynosure of all eyes  
sincere in a world  
of hypocrisy and deceit

you bartered him  
for a petty necklace?

(235/3&4)

dazzled by the jewel  
your action led to the rift

foolish one  
the page has turned  
dohag you must face

like crores of deluded souls  
seduced by a mere trinket

defeated one  
you lost favour  
dohag you must face

(235/5&6)

i curse myself  
carried away  
by the glitter and the glitz  
i lost out  
kaunroon outwitted me

(236/7)

that necklace had no pearls  
you were deceived

the trick  
caused the separation  
says latif

you choked on that string of sorrow  
a maid emerged victorious  
the beloved  
otherwise never shows animosity

(236/8&9)

bare arms  
neck  
hair plainly tied  
no surma or singhar  
even then  
chanesar was pleased  
  
gold bangles and red necklace  
hair perfumed with oils  
yet  
he abandons me  
(236/10&11)

note of discord struck  
the jewel becomes an excuse  
  
friend  
none can subdue a husband  
he overrules all reasoning  
(237/14)

she now sleeps in our bed  
under the same quilt  
lord chanesar  
i never expected this  
of you  
(237/16)

enter my abode mian chanesar  
i have flung the necklace far away  
  
my beloved i was misled  
i have flung the necklace far away  
  
at your door i dare not flirt  
i have flung the necklace far away  
(238/Waee)

lured by riches  
in the hell of vanity  
she scorched  
  
labelled a fool  
ridiculed by all  
her child-like innocence  
forever lost

(238/1)

how could you deceive a lord  
who knows your deepest cravings?

leela  
despite your ingenuity  
did you really believe  
a necklace  
would do the trick?

(238/3)



i wanted to please him  
to share his bed  
but  
god willed something else  
  
those tricksters  
have been elevated  
  
once known to be perceptive  
i am now unable to raise my head

(238/4&5)

god  
do not make me cunning  
they sometimes  
encounter dilemmas

when i was not so  
my beloved accepted me

(238/6)

why are married women  
abandoned by their husbands?

perhaps it angers the spouse  
when women please themselves?

(238/11)

leela why show off?  
why argue with chanesar  
as if he were your own?

he is quite elusive  
now kaunroon has won him over

(239/14)

leela wrap a piece of cloth  
around your neck  
do away with pretence  
  
he will not refuse  
when approached with remorse

(240/20)

if he does not respond  
weep or beg  
please him somehow  
  
implore him yet again  
the master is merciful

(240/21&22)

let none try to deceive chanesar  
or take him for granted

there is no room for mistake  
the slightest error leads to punishment  
i realize that now

(241/1&2)

the suhagini deck themselves

with necklaces and gems

you prefer the humble  
my lord

i realize that now

(241/3)

after endless mistakes  
i stand at your door

if you get offended  
where can i go?

my protector  
i beg  
forgiveness for  
my follies

(241/6)

i am foolish  
you're full of grace

you always pardon  
this sinful face

lord  
it's in your nature to clothe  
the naked

(241/7)

my lord  
why act as if you never belonged to me?

please do not scrutinize

come nearer and honour me  
please do not stay away

(241/8)

my detestable ways  
have dragged me to the ground  
i realize that now

lord  
do not give up on me  
you have many consorts  
I have only you

(242/10&11)

leela  
contain your sorrow  
forget the past  
pick up a broom  
sweep the courtyard

the lord is about to enter  
your humble hut

(242/14&15)

leela  
you cannot argue with the lord  
you cannot understand him  
even if you feel  
he is your own

kaunroon has won over the king

(239/14)

# Sri Raag



worthless are my earrings

i trade in trash

not pearls

i am a nobody

a mere sinner

you are the knower

lord

you sustain this miserable being

(50/7)

give me what you like

in these tumultuous waters

i am helpless

accept my request

lord

steer my boat

away

from these strong currents

(50/10)

superior sails  
new riggings  
oars of ivory

lord  
protect these brave sailors  
with their loaded ships  
may their mission be fulfilled

(50/12&13)

merciful sustainer  
of the world  
i cannot endure a fair trial  
only you can shield me

(52/1)

in the deep ocean  
jewels are in abundance  
says latif

divers bring up priceless piles  
even a small fraction  
will fill your coffers

(52/3&4)

standing  
on the banks of the ocean  
why be indolent?

see them sail  
your turn could be next

(54/13)

the ways of god and men  
differ

men enter whirlpools  
god salvages boats  
steering them away  
from the deep  
praise to the lord

the boat is old and leaking  
do not overload it  
seeker

(54/15&16)

boatman  
how can you have the best  
of both worlds?

drowsy all night  
near the rudder  
you want to sail away  
the next morning?

(58/16)

how can you sleep  
boatman?

like curds churning  
the water swirls  
the port is perilous

(58/20)

your companions load the boats  
alas for your sleepy eyes

your neighbours tighten the ropes  
alas for your sleepy eyes

the boat sets sail your turn has come  
alas for your sleepy eyes

dreaming you slept the night away  
alas for your sleepy eyes

did you not hear the roar of the waves?  
alas for your sleepy eyes

do not forget the wrath of watery graves  
alas for your sleepy eyes

(58/Waee)

lord  
everyone confers goodness on the virtuous  
lord  
you confer goodness even on the evil ones  
i entrust all to you  
(60/3)

where precious pearls are hoarded  
hoards of thieves are seen  
  
consider it your fortune  
if jewels are not stolen  
  
(62/18)

get up and pray for mercy  
the tide will torment you  
otherwise  
  
for unknown reasons  
the ocean did not claim you  
yesterday

yesterday  
huge vessels capsized

today  
your small boat is in  
the eye of the storm

(63/4)

mariner  
steer your boat clear  
even seasoned seamen fear  
to cross the ocean  
with expert guidance

(63/7)

fasten your raft  
in shallow waters

friend  
none will tow it  
in the deep

(65/1)

waters rise and ebb  
celestial bodies never rest  
  
you take everything easy  
  
in sleep and sloth  
life passes by  
  
(65/8)

difficult is the path to the supreme  
even those who appear to know  
are sometimes bewildered  
  
with love in your heart  
swim against the current  
  
(65/9)

## **Sur Aasaa**



vigilant  
i search for a mentor  
combing infinity  
  
limitless is he  
  
endlessly i yearn  
he evades me  
  
(355/1)

with  
the burden  
of ego  
none can cross the ocean  
  
he is one  
discard duality  
  
(355/2)

save me  
from duality

i'll merge  
when  
i becomes you

(355/3)

that  
cannot exist without  
this  
god's secrets lurk in his creation  
say the seers

(355/7)

if your self  
you still see  
what use are prayers?

if your self  
you can forget

then go proclaim  
god is great

(356/11)

if with the sun's first rays  
the eyes do not see the beloved

pull them out  
feed them to the crows

(357/11)

somewhere something  
these eyes have seen  
exhilarated by love  
these eyes cannot sleep

(358/9)

how they weep  
more they see  
the more they want  
  
how they pine  
for a glimpse of the divine

(358/13)

these eyes  
crisscross paths  
ever since they fell in love  
  
now quarrelling  
now making up

(358/15)

these eyes  
brimming with tears  
clashing like monsoon clouds  
  
such a heavy downpour

(358/17)

what to do with these eyes?  
they do not heed my advice  
even in sleep i pay the price

wandering to hazardous locales  
they endanger my life

(359/19)

what to do with these eyes?  
falling in love  
without asking me?

i am trapped  
no retreat for me

(359/20)

hold a steady inward gaze  
swim contrary to the world's ways

choose to go upstream  
while others float downstream

(359/21)

eyes  
jealous is the beloved  
when your gaze wanders

save yourself for him  
alone

(359/23)

if your body  
is not finer  
than a needle  
how will you find a place  
in the beloved's eyes?

(361/13)

my beloved  
when you praise me  
others envy  
  
let's not waste  
this precious night  
in accusations

(361/16)

love is demanding  
never easy to preserve  
  
guard it from gossipers  
mischief-mongers

(361/17)

those rogues should not hound me  
is it a crime to seek the beloved?

love's arrow has struck  
i bleed  
(362/18)

he strikes  
but he is not cruel  
  
he strikes  
for he is benevolent  
  
we fail to understand  
his paradoxical ways

(362/24)

renounce  
display of renunciation  
  
let go  
without going anywhere  
  
heed this  
let others heed it  
  
move  
towards the void  
(364/4&5)

skepticism

please go

we are those

for whom we pine

we have seen

our beloved

(365/8)

reciting the kalma

bears no mark of real faith

where deceit and ego lurk

outwardly a muslim

inwardly a fake

(365/14)

you cease to be a true kafir

refrain from calling yourself one

unfit for janio and tilak

you are not even a true hindu

(365/15)

a face like moses  
in truth a devil  
  
wretched one  
why not drop the mask?

(365/16)

most avoid vices  
the beloved shuns virtues  
    cast them away  
    virtues listed  
    lose their value  
  
approach him  
    head down  
  
he will come to you

(366/24)

hidden from me  
are the innermost secrets  
of the world

countless oceans boil within  
i burn

smokeless i burn

(367/30)

my beloved bound me first  
then threw me into deep waters

standing on the bank  
he said  
do not wet your garments

(367/38)

how can one standing  
in deep waters  
escape from being wet?

holy one  
teach me this secret

(368/39)

those who make their  
body a rosary  
mind a bead  
heart a musical instrument  
hear songs of love

god is one  
god is infinite

even in sleep they remain awake

(368/47)

## **Sur Kamode**



This Sur is based on the following folk tale of Noori-Jam.

Jam Tamachi was a ruler of Sindh. In his kingdom was a beautiful lake, Keenjhar, where many dark-skinned fisherfolks had settled. Among them lived Noori, who despite her background, had unmatched grace. Once, while boating, the king saw her and was so impressed that he made her his queen.

One day, the king asked all his queens to present themselves before him. The most admired one would be rewarded with a ride in the royal coach. All the queens adored themselves in glittering jewellery. But Noori, a personification of humility, stood in a simple dress with a lotus in her hand which she presented to the king.

Touched by her simplicity, she was selected for the royal ride and declared his chief queen.

i am a smelly gunderi  
you are a man of royalty

i am a fisherwoman full of flaws  
you are powerful and scholarly  
  
with your pomp and palaces  
will you favour me?

king  
please do not  
turn me away

(305/1to5)

you are an emperor  
who honoured us

poor  
we were ostracized by all  
dirty  
we quivered in our skins

you made us  
your kith and kin

(306/8to10)

noori

you are no longer a fisherwoman  
you need not cut the smelly fish

let other queens  
embellish themselves

you  
a fresh lotus  
outclassed them  
won the coveted ride  
in the royal carriage

(307/17to19)

neither her face  
nor her mannerisms  
revealed her occupation

she became  
queen of queens  
the king  
tied the beedo on her wrist

(307/23)

in keenjhar  
none equalled her beauty  
all fisher folk exempted  
from taxes and tariffs

the king fans her  
with peacock feathers

(307/24)

my royal husband  
apple of my eye  
you have elevated me  
may you live long  
  
over the water  
under flowering trees  
lotus on either bank  
boat swaying  
in the northern breeze  
  
in the cradle of the lake  
i am with the king  
satiated  
fulfilled  
(603/1to5)

## Sur Ramkali



fire  
in their souls  
a burning desire

these yogis belong to another world  
i cannot live without them

(395/2)

the lahutes departed  
leaving behind  
echoes of their songs

i search everywhere  
i cannot live without them

(395/3&4)

divine music resonates  
my head throbs  
i die a thousand deaths  
  
i search everywhere  
i cannot live without them  
  
(395/5)

do not forget the vairaagis  
even for a moment  
  
follow their footprints  
their paths  
to eternity  
  
i cannot live without them  
  
(395/6)

no deliberation

or discord

just

haunting music

an awareness

of the here and now

i cannot live without them

(395/6)

their music

steers me

up the stream

of divine secrets

i cannot live without them

(396/11&12)

such mysteries  
seductive are their singees

i am wounded  
shattered

i cannot live without them

(396/14&15)

from hinglaj  
the naked ones go to naani  
via dwarka  
to pay homage to shiva  
ali guides them

i cannot live without them

(398/31)

to their mystical music  
pulsating rhythm  
the world turns a deaf ear  
i cannot live without them

(399/40)

forsaking the parts  
they merge with the whole  
their only abode  
being the land of the homeless

(399/41)

absorbed in alakh  
afflicted with bleeding wounds  
restless for the lord  
they wander day and night

let us go and visit them

(403/1&2)

reject the norm  
wear the garb of nothingness  
  
if you shame the attire  
the attire will be ashamed of you

he alone is a saami  
who surrenders

(403/4&5)

leaving attachments behind  
ascetics pierce their ears

lighting a campfire  
earth becomes their throne

abandoning everything  
towards hinglaj they proceed

they accept nothing  
let us go and visit them

(404/8to10)

neither vice nor virtue  
caste nor creed  
absence of greed  
the fire of separation simmers  
tears of blood flow  
they long to meet the lord

(404/13)

they will return says my heart  
these aadesis will overlook my shortcomings  
  
i will lay my hair on their path  
my sorrows will flee when they accept me  
  
they will take me wherever they go  
they will return says my heart

(405/Waee)

if a yogi you want to be  
stay away from the worldly  
learn from those  
who know everything  
yet pretend to know nothing  
  
befriend the blessed  
who are never reborn

(406/1&2)

if a yogi you want to be  
serve the servant  
respect your guru  
rid the self of desire  
  
with the sword of endurance  
proceed towards hinglaj

(406/3&4)

if a yogi you want to be  
silence your mind  
accept your fate

with a burning flame within  
beads in hand  
obey the great master

(406/6)

if a yogi you want to be  
drink the cup of nothingness  
  
become  
that  
nothingness

(406/7)

seeker  
ordinary ears  
do not decipher whispers

replace these  
donkey's ears  
sell them off

tune into the inner ear

(408/23)

do not be forgetful converse with allah  
the path of love is laden with misery

even enlightened souls have gone weeping  
those sleeping did not receive blessings

do not be forgetful converse with allah  
at midnight he will come to you

(408/Waee)

with your face turned  
in the right direction  
the whole world is a mosque  
great heights the yogis reach  
higher than knowledge itself  
tell me in which direction  
should i bow my head  
he is everywhere  
(410/5)

the fire of love burns within  
outside layers of ash settle  
severe suffering  
intense happiness  
profound awareness  
in the cave of silence  
all is renounced  
heaven and hell they shun  
believers and non-believers  
are treated alike  
(411/12)

wandering  
they did not find the lord  
sitting still  
they found him  
  
no need to visit  
kabul and kashmir  
  
on the path of truth  
they found him within

(411/16)

they accept raging winds  
none protects them  
but allah  
  
surrounded by harshness  
in the lap of nothingness  
they live like contended kings

(412/20&21)

ram-ram  
echoing in their souls  
cups of silence they drink  
like nomads  
ever on the move  
  
i miss them this morning  
(413/2&3)

with passing years  
dirt piles  
ego fades  
hair turns grey  
  
liberated  
they meet their master  
(414/6)

my eyes led me astray  
whom should i blame?

medicines failed me  
doctors deserted me

a blissful memory remains  
love refuses to wane

my eyes led me astray  
whom should i blame?

latif craves today  
for their exhilarating presence

(414/Waee)

they sleep  
when others are awake  
they move  
when others are asleep  
  
when allah resides  
in the entire universe  
where should i direct  
these feet?

(416/6&7)

resting during the day  
alert at midnight  
never revealing their identity  
the aadesis bathe in dust

hunger  
their food  
silence  
their speech

(416/8)

throw away the langoti  
tighten your belt  
embrace nakedness

seeker  
join these yogis  
*(417/14)*

hearing the call  
before the birth of islam  
they severed all ties  
became one with gorakhnath  
*(417/15)*

lord  
bring back the ascetics  
like husks of grain  
i'll shed my anxiety  
  
when they visit my place  
i'll spread the good news  
*(417/17)*

do not desire  
reverence or service  
let go of desire itself  
  
lips sealed  
move towards purab  
*(418/22)*

bidding goodbye the yogis left yesterday  
prepared to face the heat and cold

they warmed their hands i shed tears  
my heart broke like a piece of sandalwood

bidding goodbye the yogis left yesterday  
prepared to face heat and cold

(418/Waee)

here for just one night  
visit them many times a day  
pour out your feelings  
serve them well  
gratify your being  
for soon they'll depart

once in hinglaj  
you'll meet them if luck favours

(419/1&2)

ashes  
dry straws  
a void  
remains  
they breathed life  
into the conches  
into me

as they leave  
i weep  
i weep

(420/8 to 11)

a mind troubled  
was appeased  
  
an eye blinded  
opened  
  
a garden blossomed  
in the desert  
  
(420/14to16)

yogis are many but I love these vairaagis  
smeared in dust they eat little  
never saving a grain in their begging bowls

seated on the wayside i look for them  
remembering the sanyasis tears well up  
mother they were so very kind to me

they radiated brightness  
yogis are many but i love these vairaagis  
says latif  
  
(421/Waee)

unlike others these aadesis  
feast on thirst and hunger

roza they choose  
over festivities of id

(422/10)

yesterday  
buried in memory  
today  
the day of departure

tomorrow  
all will die  
today  
you must die  
seeker

(423/12)

do not search without a lamp  
it is futile

countless have been blinded  
in this darkness

what you consider a lamp  
is really the brilliant sun

converting the dark night  
into a blazing day

(423/22&23)

silken robes covering  
shabby rags inside  
they become servants  
of an ass

shabby rags covering  
silken robes inside  
they become servants  
of the lord

(426/42&43)

seeker  
seeing the many shades of flowers  
do not get distracted

recognize  
the one  
the only one

(426/45)

what did they see  
what terrified them?  
  
the yogis could not stay  
something compelled them to leave

(427/52)

no  
sky  
earth  
sun  
moon  
light  
darkness

only  
the lord

(427/55)

i bow to the yogis  
salute their search and determination  
  
night and day they pervade my very being  
at midnight i request allah  
merciful god make me worthy of them

i bow to the yogis  
salute their search and determination

(42/Waee)

# Umar Marui



The story is based on the following folk tale:

Marui was the daughter of a farmer who lived in Maleer in the Thar desert. She was engaged to Khetsen, a man from her own community.

Phoga, a farm helper, also wanted to marry Marui but was refused by her father. The disappointed lover took revenge by instigating King Umar Soomro to kidnap Marui. Phoga spoke so highly of her that the King was tempted to make her his own wife. The two of them reached Maleer in disguise and managed to kidnap her near the village well and took her to Umarkote.

King Umar tempted her with luxuries but Marui rejected everything. She threatened to commit suicide if the King even touched her. She yearned for her village folk. Umar, frustrated at not being able to win her, thought that perhaps imposing hardships would help and kept her captive in a fort.

Pining for her people, Marui was on the verge of death. She requested Umar to send her corpse to Maleer and also assure her people that she had died a chaste woman. This touched Umar's heart. Respecting her loyalty and upright character, he arranged for her return.

Much to her dismay, Marui found that her people would not accept her. They asked her to prove her chastity by holding a hot iron bar. When Umar, who had made her his sister, heard about this, he was enraged and brought his army into the village. But

Marui urged him not to intervene and went through the ordeal. She was eventually accepted by her people.

Marui's love for Maleer, her native village, is a symbol of patriotism. As a spiritual allegory, Marui symbolizes the human soul pining for its original spiritual abode.

when i heard the words  
am i not your lord?  
my soul replied  
yes you are

since then the vows  
to my kinsfolk were made

(269/1)

from the first day of creation  
i was bound to my maroos  
soomra  
do not chain me  
such shackles are of no avail

(269/2&3)

**before  
sound  
matter  
adam  
creation**

**i belonged to my beloved  
how can i ever forget that?**

**(269/566)**

this is the prison of my fate

i am a captive

this is a trap of destiny

i am caged

king

release me

return me to my village

(270/8)

camel men

bring their messages

i belong to my maroos

even if they ostracize me

ink in hand i try to write

my tears wet the pen

(271/4)

umar  
everywhere in the vast thar  
i see thatched huts of maroos  
permit me to graze the cattle  
leave with the loi's honour intact

(272/7)

village girls dress in loi  
preferring coarse wool  
to silken robes

king  
do not force me to give up  
my ancestral attire

ashamed  
i'll burn in fire

(273/1)

how can love  
be exchanged for gold  
or huts for palaces?  
that would be total misbehaviour

(274/11)

how can the disgraced wear white  
or sleep under quilts?

how can the humiliated be remembered  
or respected by anyone?

king  
let me remain thirsty  
i shun your sherbet

(274/12&13)

umar  
the desert is their abode  
golana and gugur trees their canopy  
creepers their companions

my fortunate friends  
delight in nature

(274/15)

if i die here  
longing for my land  
deliver my corpse to pawahars  
those age-old creepers will preserve it

having died  
i shall be resurrected  
if my body reaches my soil

(282/14)

that is my desert my land  
no taxes and few restrictions

there  
walk my people  
with their typical gait  
baskets on head  
water trickling  
feet dusty  
sweat dripping

placing flowers in the mangers  
they celebrate mother earth's bounty

(285/7&8)

in my mind's eye  
i see the winding trunks  
of sodotti trees

how i wish to walk in the jungle  
picking berries  
my fiancé by my side

(285/9)

with a fine needle  
my spirit is attached  
to maroos

soomra  
my body is in your fort  
my soul in those shanties

(286/12)

a needle  
with an emperor  
i cannot compare  
  
it clothes  
the naked but remains  
fully bare  
  
it's qualities  
cannot be appreciated  
in this life  
  
(286/14)

always in her mind  
lighting up the soul  
a tryst as old as eternity  
  
today or tomorrow  
marui will die  
submerged  
in the memory of her maroos  
  
(287/1)

before dawn  
they fetch water  
from the deep wells

animals quench their thirst  
women fill buckets  
laughing and sharing tales  
while the lazy ones look on

this poor girl  
was kidnapped from  
that place

(288/10)

this separation  
gnaws my soul

torment my constant companion  
taunts and tensions everywhere  
here in soomra's palace  
there in the village

(289/17&18)

contented  
the maroos build homes  
whenever it rains  
wherever the grass grows  
  
the scene unfolds before my eyes  
i thirst for your love  
  
have you forgotten my tears  
my plight?  
  
i thirst for one sip  
that sip  
is better than these  
over-flowing cups  
  
(290/1&2)

the camel man has arrived

with auspicious tidings

do not forget your spouse

your loi and your honour

says latif

in a few days

the winds of change

will free you from this fortress

(292/4&5)

how can my friends be angry?

were they to see my shabby hair

my dark circled eyes

they would appreciate my loyalty

(293/10)

as long as there is self-respect

i shall not live here

the oyster lives in the sea

never in river water

it looks up to the clouds

my mind longs for maleer

(293/12)

living in the sea

oysters shun salt water

waiting for a sweet drop

from the clouds above

reaching high

it produces a pearl

(293/14)

friends

adopt the oyster's virtuous ways

surrounded by sea

it still

looks up for rain

(294/15)

at last  
the envoy from maleer comes  
  
messenger  
i pray for your well-being  
may your feet be smeared with dust  
  
dust of maleer is musk for me  
  
(295/1to3)

blessed were those days in prison  
seperation shattered  
my soul  
torrents of tears purified it  
  
(295/8)

clad in rags  
she won over maroos  
  
she did not barter huts for palaces  
preferring jungles  
over landscaped gardens  
  
may the lord always protect us  
says latif  
  
(295/Waee)

## Sur Khambat



the pathway  
to my beloved is moonlit  
let us reach there camel  
before others awake  
those in the mind's eye  
are never far away

(38/7&8)

moon you are  
no match for my beloved  
by the fourteenth day  
your splendour fades

you wax and wane  
he shines always

(38/12)

a hundred suns  
and a thousand moons  
may rise  
  
without you  
my beloved  
darkness looms wide

(38/13)

moon  
may you become  
a thin stark line again

may darkness prevail  
lovers wish to meet

(39/16)

moon  
the truth  
i reveal to you now  
you have neither eyes nor nose  
you do not compare  
to my beloved's visage

(39/17)

moon  
the truth  
i reveal to you now

your face  
occasionally becomes  
a line  
at other times  
a quarter  
(39/18)

when my beloved  
raised amorous eyes

the sun paled  
moon faded

stars surrendered  
diamonds and pearls  
lost their splendour

(39/19)

moon  
enter the courtyard  
touch his feet

convey my message  
in whispers

(41/5)

camel  
can you pick up speed?  
tonight i must reach  
  
forget the thorny weeds  
i'll feed you sandalwood  
  
(42/15)

camel  
can you run and leap?  
do not shame your pedigree  
  
prove your worth  
do me a good turn  
  
(43/17)

camel  
i'll adorn your neck  
with silk and rubies  
  
i'll decorate your reins with gold  
if you reach tonight  
  
(43/20)

fetters and chains  
fail to restrain  
the camel feasts on thorny weeds

lord  
cure him with your grace  
this animal is a disgrace

(44/32&33)

nine chains  
ten shackles  
fifteen straps  
to restrain the mind

yet  
it sprints towards  
the beloved

(45/39&40)

## Sur Poorab



crow

convey my affection  
bow before the loved ones

crow

kindly enquire  
about their well-being

(435/1)

fly to my loved ones  
give my salaams  
bring back their message

i'll adorn your wings  
with gold

(436/8)

crow  
take my heart  
i'll cut and give it to you  
perhaps the loved ones will ask  
who offers this sacrifice?

(436/12)

perched on the tree  
the crow caws  
my loved one sends a message  
let me listen  
stop this noise  
(436/14)

my mind soars  
the aroma of spring  
and musk  
surely comes from my lord  
  
crow  
what is the good news?  
(437/19)

my prayers answered  
wishes fulfilled  
  
this creature brings  
favourable tidings  
thank you crow  
  
thank you  
lord  
(437/20)

be it to

a

dog

or

a

crow

i offer my head  
a hundred times over  
for just one message  
from the loved one

(438/28)

## Sur Karayal



higher and higher  
skyward it soars  
far away from cranes  
  
towards its beloved  
towards the lake  
  
god is one  
  
with these words  
it passed the test of birds  
with flying colours  
(443/1&2)

swans  
plunge deep within  
to taste of pure ecstasy  
  
cranes  
hover around the banks  
skimming shallow waters  
(443/4&5)

cranes  
stomp through puddles  
making them muddy

swans  
steer clear  
ashamed to be there

(443/7)

once  
with swans  
  
forever  
with swans  
  
never again  
befriending cranes

(444/12)

swan  
beware of  
bird-catchers  
at the lake  
  
fifty of them  
target a single bird  
  
god help that poor soul  
riding the waves  
(445/17&18)

not of flesh'n bone  
a fake of wood'n grass  
  
lured the swans  
to death's jaws  
(445/19&20)

in deep water  
the lotus is rooted  
way above  
flies the bee

lovers meet  
against all odds  
such is love's reach

(445/22)

lotus stays rooted  
the buzzing bee wanders

love unites  
they drink relentlessly  
yet the thirst remains

(445/23)

swans alight  
settle for the night

fragrance  
fills the lake

pure  
serene  
unsoiled

(446/27)

songs and dances  
come to an end  
peacocks perish

swans migrate  
leaving behind crafty cranes  
in the polluted lakes

(446/28to30)

## Sur Dahar



kanda

tell me about bygone times  
about those cattle owners  
who sat beneath your shade

how did you pass  
those difficult days?

since the masters have left  
your verdue has lost its lustre

flowers fall

blossoms fade

(455/1to4)

fatty fish

why did you not return  
when the rivulet was full?

now trapped in the shallow  
you hang from the fisherman's hook

(456/11)

allah  
the great  
you fill me with hope  
  
my creator  
your bounty is limitless  
your name resonates in my soul

(458/18)

lord  
i marvel at your ways  
you can drown leaves  
cause stones to float  
  
an honour it will be  
if you visit this sinner's abode

(458/19)

allah  
great is your name  
so is my request for mercy

need i say more?  
you can read my mind

(459/23)

i am  
naked and exposed  
cover me  
  
provider of shelters  
do not break your ties  
with this humble one

your name  
is my solace  
(459/24&25)

masters are many  
my lord  
you are kindness itself  
though aware of my faults  
you overlook them

(460/5&6)

ignoring the master  
you celebrate with others

foolish woman  
why collect husk  
and leave the grain  
behind?

(460/7)

not dew drops  
of dawn  
tears of the night  
are these

lamenting the plight  
of the afflicted

(461/16)

foolish one  
you abandoned the lord  
for the sake of the world

attracted to the froth  
you allowed the milk to spill

(461/20)

laakha  
i am a destitute old woman  
under your protection once  
we odes built abodes  
in your care  
we leave our huts now

our temples  
and possessions  
have been razed to dust

(466/48)

worn out baskets in hand  
spades slung over shoulders  
the poor odes migrate  
says latif  
(446/51)

## Sur Sohini



During the reign of Shah Jahan, a village potter named Tulla lived on the banks of a river with his beautiful daughter Sohini.

Tulla was so talented that even the king patronized his art.

One day a wealthy trader from Iran, Izzat Beg, came to Gujarat, saw Sohini and instantly fell in love with her. Beg's love was reciprocated and in order to see Sohini, he frequented her father's shop and purchased pots in dozens which he disposed off at cheaper prices. He ended up bankrupt and was forced to approach Tulla, who hired him and entrusted him with the job of taking the buffaloes for grazing. Izzat Beg came to be known as Mehar.

Sohini and Mehar would meet secretly, and when the potter came to know about it, he got his daughter married to Dam, a young man from his own community. Mehar, after losing his job settled on the other bank of the river, Chenab. When Sohini came to know about this, she used to leave her husband at night to meet Mehar and return early morning.

Unfortunately Mehar fell ill, and became an invalid. Sohini with the help of a baked matka, used to cross the currents to meet her lover. On return, she used to hide the matka in the bushes. However, this could not remain a secret for long and, one night, her in-laws secretly substituted the baked matka for an unbaked one. The next day, when Sohini reached mid-stream, the matka gave way and she began to call out to Mehar for help. Mehar heard her call and jumped into the river. However, he was too weak to help her and they both drowned.

still a rivulet  
the river yet to surge  
  
friends in the comfort  
of four walls  
wallow not in love  
  
a glimpse of my sahar  
and never will you hold me back  
matka in hand you will submerge

(79/3)

those who got a glimpse  
abandoned their homes  
and husbands  
  
even without matkas  
in the whirlpool they swirled

(79/5)

women crowd banks  
longing for sahar  
some fear life  
  
others stage a pretence  
he comes to those  
who take the plunge

(80/9)

crows perched on trees  
listen to mulla's prayers  
  
while on a matka she moves  
to her lover's abode  
  
(80/10)

beseeching god's help  
sohini journeys on a matka  
  
ornaments sink  
sharks  
crocodiles encircle  
whales threaten  
to tear limbs apart  
  
(81/15)

with its support  
i saw  
my love's face  
  
i cannot  
let the matka go  
dearer than life  
it is to me  
  
(81/16)

the matka cracks  
but it does not matter  
a veil it was  
a screen  
  
my  
every vein  
echoes a song  
my gaze set on him  
i swim unfazed  
  
mehar guides me  
(81/19&20)

leave your self behind  
let love be your guide  
  
you will cross  
the roaring river  
in a short while  
(82/26)

for those who love  
the matka is a burden  
for those who seek mehar  
the river is a dry bed

(83/32)

mehar  
is  
sohini  
so is the river  
an unfathomable mystery

(83/34)

she jumps in  
to choose safe waters  
is the route of impostors  
those who love  
take on the mighty river  
(86/4)

the river heralds continuously  
she answers the clarion call  
in the darkness she plummets  
into the icy water  
(87/12)

people swim in summer  
she delights in wintry waters  
slipping into the crippling cold

how unfair the river  
is to the lover

(88/17)

river  
do not rush  
and gush  
  
at monsoon's end  
your frenzy will ease  
  
to the very bottom  
your levels will recede

(88/19)

sohini  
learn the lesson of shariat  
stronger than the current of tariqat  
is the flow of haqiqa  
  
lovers are finally content in maarfat  
(87/10)

come  
help me mehar  
  
the river flows furiously  
my days stretch endlessly  
whirlpool's deep  
the bank's steep  
twigs bob  
the river meanders so  
i have plunged in blindly

come  
help me mehar  
  
oh dark night  
rescue me  
  
guide me to the other side  
the raging river unnerves  
  
water surges  
monster's gorge  
  
i must cross these currents  
my eyes seek you  
only you  
  
help help me mehar

(89/Waee)

i hear the bells  
enchanting  
intoxicating  
the sweet language of lovers

sombre night  
eddies  
gorges  
take me towards mehar

i cross the tumultuous river  
listening to the tinkling bells

(90/1to3)

when remembrance itself

fuels existence

why seek union?

with every breath  
my memory of mehar

soars

(90/6)

a sip of love  
she thirsts for more

a sip of love  
she craves for mehar  
without him  
is there existence?

(91/17)

none can restrain the other  
let each one decide  
  
i have entered mid-stream  
a fire burns and mehar summons me

no one can stop me  
let each one decide

(92/Waee)

fix your gaze on mehar  
on him alone  
you'll swim across  
without a float

slipping away at midnight  
crossing the raging river  
returning at dawn

mind  
have you lost yourself?

(94/5)

in this river itself  
let me merge with mehar

he seems very far  
he is really quite near

to meet him  
is my sacred call

(94/7&8)

when the world's in repose  
i close my eyes  
thoughts overwhelm

other people's reproach  
becomes my honour

(95/14)

driven by love  
had she not entered the river  
the world would have forgotten sohini

she would have died anyway

says latif  
the drowning redeemed her

(95/15)

who am i?  
why this whirlpool?  
why these taunts?  
  
no one takes the plunge  
unless destiny wills it  
sisters  
my fate plays a hand  
at this hour

(95/18)

between devil and the deep  
if i stay away love torments  
  
if i go the world damns me  
if i break promises my body shudders  
  
go go you must  
let eyes race like feet  
  
let not even a whimper be heard  
alert none, rush ahead

(97/Waee)

## **Sur Dahar**



**you are invited by the lord**

**believe these words**

**wash**

**come sit**

**he will feed you**

**(468/1)**

**get rid of the thief  
lurking within  
make peace with the sultan**

**from his door  
precious gifts will pour**

**(468/2)**

heavenly wine  
is the obstacle  
  
conquer all  
to meet the king

(468/3)

you are the crowned  
monarch of philanthropists

your charity  
many times more  
than the size  
of the begging bowls  
at your door

(468/4)

samo calls  
the afflicted  
my distress will diminish  
as soon as he rides by

who else protects  
the poor?

(468/6&7)

do not wander here and there  
build a secure shelter  
  
he will come to you  
make a prince of the pauper  
  
one look from him  
one word and all worries fade

(468/9)

i am full of flaws  
i seek your protection

i have wasted my life  
i seek your shelter

you know me inside out  
i seek your presence

i yearn for holy madeena  
says sayyad  
(470/Waee)

raahu  
your praise is sung  
across continents and seas  
you provide horses for pedestrians  
you accept all  
without creed or caste  
(472/10)

if pleased  
he fills coffers  
if displeased  
he still fills coffers

(473/16)

none compares to you  
my king

your generosity pours like rain  
eighteen thousand haatims  
are put to shame

(474/5)

if you desire anything  
go to king  
  
why degrade your self  
before others?  
  
minstrels  
overcome worries at his door  
  
(474/6)

he singles out  
the needy  
  
king samo calls  
paupers to his door  
and showers benediction  
  
(474/9)

## Sur Barvo



like a reed crying out  
when the grass is cut  
my heart shrieks

physician  
why do you continue  
to brand my arm?

(385/2)

like the elephant's trunk  
lying on the ground  
my body prostrates before you  
says latif

this is my way of reaching you  
my lord

(385/5)

if you come just once  
i'll touch your feet  
spread my hair as a bedsheets

if you come just once  
i'll serve you forever

(386/6)

my beloved  
was it right  
to bestow love on me  
then slip away?

even if love was not conferred  
was it right to slip away?

(386/10)

some are near  
although far away

some are far  
although near

we forget some soon  
others we always remember

like the twisted horns  
of a buffalo  
my heart is entwined with you

(386/12)

people pray for wealth  
i pray for a glimpse  
of the beloved

i can sacrifice  
the world for just one glimpse

even taking his name  
comforts me  
why ask for more?

(387/14)

sometimes  
he closes doors  
sometimes  
he opens them  
sometimes  
i am not let in  
sometimes  
i am invited  
sometimes  
i long to hear him  
sometimes  
he shares secrets  
such are the ways  
of my master

(387/18)

do me a favour  
    lord  
        a favour  
equal to your greatness  
  
will it be too much for you  
    to look at me just once?

(389/1)

like a blacksmith  
    my beloved  
has chained my soul  
    to him  
  
(389/5)

when my beloved  
graciously steps out

earth utters his name  
and kisses his feet

astonished fairies  
stand by reverently

my beloved  
is beauty personified

(389/6)

why have so many friends  
when one will do?  
only weather cocks  
wander from door-to-door

surrender your heart  
to one alone  
to the envy of all

(392/7&8)

where have you learnt  
this butcher's trade?

beloved  
having a sharp knife  
you pierce me  
with a blunt one

see my wounds  
they bleed and bleed  
with stabs

(392/10)

# Moomal Rano



In the fifteenth century, Raja Nand ruled in Mirpur Mathelo in

Sindh. He had nine daughters of which Moomal was the most beautiful and Soomal the cleverest. Due to Moomal's folly, one day Raja Nand lost all his wealth. In a rage, he wanted to kill her but Soomal intervened assuring her father compensation for the loss.

Moomal was renowned for her beauty and many princes sought her hand. Soomal decided to cash in on this. She had a magnificent palace constructed on the banks of the river Kaak in Ludano and named it Kaak Mahal. It was full of mirages: the shallow waters surrounding it appeared to be very deep: ferocious roaring of lions was heard at the entrance, inside there were scented flowers with lush gardens to lure the visitors. In the bedroom were seven inviting beds. All looked alike except that six of them had ditches below instead of a mattress! The palace had labyrinth-like pathways and visitors were often accosted by thieves. Overall, the atmosphere was both mesmerizing and ominous.

An announcement was made: any man who succeeded in reaching Moomal inside the Kaak Mahal would win her hand in marriage.

Many rich people and princes came to try their luck only to find themselves looted. Some even lost their lives. The wealth thus obtained was returned to Raja Nand by his daughter, Soomal.

Rano was a minister in Hamir Soomro's kingdom. He was also married to the King's sister. One day, when he was hunting with his companions he heard of Kaak Mahal from a yogi and decided to go there. While others had failed, Rano was quick to recognize

the sorcery and overcame all obstacles. He won Moomal's hand in marriage. King Hamir was annoyed at his son-in-law and when Rano returned, he kept him under house arrest.

During Rano's absence, Moomal longed for him and sent many messages. After Rano assured the king that he would never go to Moomal again, he was freed. However one evening he slipped away and reached Kaak Mahal at midnight. There, to his dismay, he found Moomal sleeping with a young bearded man who resembled him! Actually it was Soomal dressed as Rano. Moomal had requested her sister to dress like him.

The agitated Rano left hastily leaving his walking stick behind. In the morning, when Moomal awoke, she recognized the stick. To clear the misunderstanding, she sent messengers imploring Rano to return, but he refused.

Quite desperate now, she rented a house near Rano, and dressed as a man, befriended him. They would often play chess together. One day, Rano spotted a birthmark on her arm and she was exposed. Moomal not being able to bear loosing him again, jumped into the pyre. This news reached Rano and realizing her true love, he too jumped into the fire. The two were united in death.

In this allegory, Moomal represents a soul, who even after meeting God and receiving divine grace distracts herself with false idols.

come langotia  
why shed red tears?  
  
has the beauty  
of these belles bewitched you?  
has the sight of the gujar woman  
left you spellbound?

(247/1)

with eyes like diamonds  
elite and commoners alike  
moomal cuts to size  
  
eyes like daggers  
with one look  
she slaughters  
  
that woman  
kills  
ferocious hunters  
  
that woman  
shoots  
royal princes  
  
scholars and ascetics  
both have fallen prey

(247/4to6)

let us go to kaak  
where love abounds  
where beauty prevails everywhere

let us go to kaak  
where cauldrons of love simmer  
lotus  
chandan and fruits are found  
where eyes feast on virgins

(247/8to10)

the camel is thin  
his gait swift  
he'll reach kaak's banks  
faster than a bird

(248/13)

clothes like pink roses  
shawls like green leaves  
  
hair scented with chameli  
chandan sprinkled over bodies  
  
damsels adorn themselves in jewels  
moomal rejoices  
sodho has wed me  
  
(249/1&2)

lovers  
coloured with the red earth  
of kaak  
wander about ludaano  
shedding tears of blood  
nothing can wash away  
colours of love  
pining for their beloved  
they lie longingly  
(250/4&5)

she  
who struck others  
herself struck  
by the arrow  
  
she  
who wounded others  
herself wounded  
by mendhro  
(250/9)

mendhro's arrow is like no other  
no other like rano

since he left ludaano  
latif says

she talks about him alone  
day and night

its rano rano

(250/10&11)

my lord  
my priceless possession  
i accept your silent taunts  
my wounds bleed  
please return to the one  
you have vanquished

(251/20&21)

throughout the night  
i have lit candles  
now dawn appears  
  
mendhro  
please return  
i am dying  
surely the crows  
have delivered my message?

(252/1)

waiting  
shedding tears  
night dissolves  
stars vanish  
the sun comes up

(252/2)

lamps filled with scented oil  
i kept the wick steady  
they burned  
till the cock crowed

traveller  
why did you not return?  
many messages were sent  
with the crows

(252/3&4)

only three stars shine  
weary constellations yawn  
walls crack and colours fade

i feel life  
slipping away  
humiliated heart  
where is sodho  
how to live without him?

(253/4to6)

you have married a lion  
cage your emotions  
a rain cloud carries  
its own burden

do not flaunt your beauty  
keep your mind on rano  
on judgement day  
you will remember sodho

(254/1)

keep  
your gaze steady  
or  
face a fall

dust to dust we all go  
today or tomorrow

(254/2&3)

kaak on fire  
the palace ablaze  
ludaano burns  
  
my body sizzles  
i am only half alive

he came and left  
leaving his stick behind

love  
do not leave me in the lurch  
do not leave me half dead  
(255/12to14)

rano  
kindly shoot me  
your arrow-like eyes  
will end my stupor  
  
pity me sodho  
i sleep on pillows wet with tears  
my relatives taunt  
wealth stifles

return rano

return

(257/5&6)

if mendhro comes to me

i'll immolate my ego

set my home on fire

severe all connections

(258/13)

friends convey the message to my beloved one

flowers spread on the bed faded yesterday

i'll soon be dead

relieve me of this distress says latif

friends convey this message to my loved one

(259/Waee)

like a boat  
i am anchored to rano

my being drifts  
i cannot sleep  
i cannot sit  
i can only weep

(262/16)

you turned this cheap metal  
to pure gold  
you overlooked my flaws  
my beloved sodho

(263/8)

beloved sodho  
your restraint puts me to shame  
without a knife you have cut my nose

at times  
those who speak not a word  
gain respect  
(264/13&14)

an ascetic appeared  
darkness disappeared

his full-moon face  
lit up the land

(266/1&2)

last night  
a message heard never before  
last night  
a divine message from rano

says latif  
he cares not for caste or creed  
accepting all who need him

(266/5)

where should i turn my camel?  
all around is radiance

magnificent gardens everywhere  
in kaak and ludaano

rano everywhere  
everywhere rano

(266/6&7)

## Sasui Punhoon



The following surs are based on this folk tale.

Sasui was born in a brahmin family but was abandoned by her parents because her horoscope predicted that she would wed a Muslim. Placed in a box, she was left to float down the river. Mohammed, a childless washerman living in Bhambore, found her and named her Sasui which means “moon” and brought her up.

Sasui grew to be a charming young woman and many men wanted to marry her. Prince Punhoon, son of Ari Jaam, ruler of Ketch in Baluchistan, had heard of her and decided to go to Bhambore in the guise of a vendor of musk and other perfumes.

Punhoon and Sasui fell in love at first sight. Mohammed did not agree to this match as Punhoon was not a washerman. Punhoon, being a prince, had never washed a single cloth in his life and when he tried to do so, he tore not only his skin, but tore the clothes as well. Sasui advised him to put gold coins in the pockets of the clothes so that the owners would not complain! When no one spoke against Punhoon’s washing skills, Mohammed agreed to their marriage. King Ari Jaam was appalled and sent many messengers to his son who refused to return without his wife.

Punhoon’s brothers decided to kidnap him. On camels, they arrived in Bhambore where they were heartily welcomed. A grand feast was arranged in their honour with drinks, food, dance and merriment. Women were excluded from the celebrations and while Sasui slept, the brothers got Punhoon drunk and departed hastily to Ketch taking him with them.

In the morning, when Sasui awoke and realized that Punhoon had been kidnapped, she decided to follow them much against the advice of her parents and friends. Following the camel's tracks, she crossed treacherous mountains and scorching deserts. When she reached Morbar Hills, a shepherd tried to molest her. Sasui prayed to God and the earth split to protect her. Sasui disappeared inside leaving just the hem of her garment on top. The shepherd realized that she was a saintly soul and made a shrine at the place.

When Punhoon came to his senses, he hastened to Bhambore, this time with the permission of his father. As he retraced Sasui's steps, he met the shepherd who related the entire story. Punhoon also prayed to God and a wide chasm appeared into which he disappeared. The two lovers were united forever in death.

In this spiritual allegory, the seeker in search of God often faces setbacks sometimes due to his own shortcomings. He has to be ever alert; Sasui lost Punhoon partly due to her negligence: she fell asleep during the celebrations. However, a true seeker, such as Sasui, continues the journey despite all hurdles to ultimately reach her goal.

## Sur Kahori



negligent one  
shamelessly you slumbered  
through the night  
they rode away with the baggage

simpleton  
why did you not run  
and stop the caravan?

(187/3)

lax one  
did you not hear  
the camels grunt?

how can those who sleep  
away the hours  
meet the beloved?  
asks latif

(187/6)

mountain  
you have shared my plight  
my lover has taken flight

weep with me  
curse my fate

(190/8&9)

mountain  
your body heats up  
what can you do?  
your limbs are of stone  
mine of steel  
fate has willed it so

(191/18)

for good or bad  
i am baroach's slave girl  
forever with punhoon

how can i forget the ketchis?  
i'm unfit  
even for their shoes

(192/8)

punhoon's reflection  
a desert cloud  
under which i proceed  
  
punhoon's reflection  
a taste of ecstasy  
i accept my turmoil gracefully

(195/11&12)

even if a fraction of my story were told  
animals and people would be silenced  
hillocks would fall apart  
mountains would burn

(196/6)

how can i weep for love?  
i have forgotten  
to weep

i can only raise my hands  
wet with tears  
and continue my journey

(198/1)

even deserts delight  
to see those who burn inside  
with love

love guides seekers of truth  
though the squint eyed see three  
all is one

(198/7)

## Sur Hussaini



sun  
do not set  
till i have seen  
my baroach

sun  
i cannot die  
till i have seen  
his footprints

(201/5)

the sun has set  
my kith and kin have left  
mother  
i am dying  
in this darkness

(201/9)

i wish they had seen me in this condition  
facing a steep and stormy path

i wish they had seen me in this condition  
talking to every tree trying to find punhoon

i wish they had seen me in this condition  
my heart bleeding like a pomegranate flower

i wish they had seen me in this condition  
they'd have gifted me trucks instead of ornaments

(202/Waee)

the earth is scorching  
my heart bleeds

mother  
caught in these fires  
i burn  
as i walk on and on

(203/1)

the fire of love  
hovers over my head

come near  
to see how painful it is

(203/2)

perspiration dripped  
i thought it to be  
the rain of love

alas it turned  
out to be merely  
the lava of love

(203/3)

mother  
if my soul forgets sajan  
may hot winds scorch me  
may i die like the babiho of thar

(203/4)

burn  
burn  
while there's life in you  
hot or cold  
no time for idling  
if darkness overcomes  
you'll lose sight of the footprints  
says latif  
(204/17&18)

foolish bhambore  
failing to recognize the aryani  
to follow punhoon

there are those  
who see with the inner eye  
search the beloved out  
even when he hides

(206/9&10)

when i go out  
he leaves ketch  
when i stay in  
he is within me  
  
to look outwards  
was a mistake  
  
friends i found baroach  
without taking a step

(208/11&12)

boulders are my bed  
rocks my cradle  
on a mattress-like mountain i lie  
pass the night with animals  
who are now  
my family  
(209/5)

why get entangled with outsiders?  
why marry an alien prince?  
you have lost your mind sasui  
  
you senseless brahmin girl  
did you think loving baroach  
was easy?  
(210/8)

separation  
is better than union  
  
after the meeting  
my love kept me at bay  
(210/11)

come  
separation  
  
this union  
has become a veil  
  
all my wounds have healed  
i have lost the pleasure of pain  
(210/12)

suffering  
led to the path of love

grief  
guided her to hote  
(211/2)

grief  
my body quivers  
like salt dissolving in water

grief  
my companion stay  
do not go sajan's way

grief  
i'll never tire of you  
leave me only after i have met hote

my sorrow never abates  
like a water wheel in motion

(211/6to8)

all bear  
some burden of sorrow  
i carry a full load

i seek out  
sellers of sorrow  
but most have left  
the marketplace

(213/21)

grief  
my garland of happiness  
in your pleasurable company  
my beloved comes to me

(213/24)

when i weep  
it feels like play  
when i laugh  
my heart burns

eyes

why did you not shed tears of blood?  
why did you allow my beloved  
to depart?

no rest till he returns

(219/8&9)

do not incinerate  
what already burns

extinguish it for a while  
like a blacksmith does

(219/13)

death will come one day  
may i die following his path

then he alone  
will be responsible  
for my death

(220/20)

seeker  
do not be disheartened  
i'm never far away  
though it might seem so sometimes  
our destination is the same

(224/24)

wandering and yearning sasui died  
lord of ketch became her pall bearer  
buried at punhoon's feet  
she was immortalized

(226/11)

## Sur Desi



stop or i'll die

do not drive away the camel

dear husband  
please visit my shanty  
your absence  
marks my day of judgement

(163/1)

it was fated  
my brother-in-law  
camels and hillocks  
would all bring sorrow  
as i followed punhoon's footprints

(163/3)

sasui

when camels entered the courtyard  
why did you not tie them with your hair  
why did you fall asleep?

(163/5)

even if my husband's kin are dishonest  
my luck may not turn for the worst

can this poor wretch  
defy the decree of fate?

(164/11)

kinship should be with natives  
how can strangers be trusted?  
they prefer their own soil

without my loved one  
i must abandon bhambore

(164/12)

mighty camel men  
why do you torture me?

this brahmin girl  
has no companion except baroach  
our ties can never be severed

(164/12)

camels  
their drivers and his kin  
are all my enemies

wind  
the fourth  
blowing away punhoon's footprints

sun  
the fifth  
setting too early

hillocks  
the sixth  
with their rocky terrain

moon  
the seventh  
rising extremely late  
in the dawn i hurry on  
criss-crossing  
mountain passes

(166/27)

caravans have arrived  
from ketch

i'll smear my body with their dust  
a slave girl i'll become  
please take me

(171/7)

caravans have arrived  
from ketch

i'll make reins with my tresses  
i'll sew the saddle with my hair  
punhoon's caravan is as dear as he

(171/11)

those wretched camel men  
abandoned me in the wilderness  
  
had i known  
i would have burnt their saddles  
whipped their camels

(172/17)

this distressed woman  
has no kin in ketch or bhambore  
says latif

no force will work on habib  
except a heartfelt plea

(176/18)

hote helps the helpless  
you need not lose hope

he may come down  
the hillock any minute  
says latif

(177/5)

those cruel mountains  
reach for the clouds

i walk barefoot  
on the foothills

come  
help me

(178/12)

torturous  
are these mountains  
i fall  
i shriek

may my cries reach his ears  
i will respond to his demands

(179/1)

love required me to keep awake  
i dozed off  
i floundered  
punhoon came  
and left

love and laziness  
never compatible

(181/15)

to live in bhambore  
is like taking poison

i am smitten  
my being belongs to hote  
you advice me not to go  
how can i obey you  
my sisters?

(182/1)

i am weak  
i cannot work or sleep  
  
sajan  
send me a salaam at least  
  
out of mercy  
think of me in vindur  
  
(183/6)

atlast  
his fragrance  
reaches the mountains  
spreads over land and trees  
  
bhambore sizzles  
silk robes shimmer  
palaces and homes glitter  
  
mother  
this slave girl's grief  
vanishes  
punhoon has arrived  
in ketch  
  
(183/8&9)

## **Sur Aabri**



be it  
the beginning  
or the end  
proceed i must

god  
let not love's labour  
be lost  
(115/1)

overwhelmed by bouts of pain  
sasui crushes pain itself  
punhoon's memory haunts

like a true lover  
she dies  
a hundred deaths  
(115/2)

love suffocates  
sasui does not retreat  
  
she drinks the nectar  
her thirst remains unquenched  
  
more she drinks  
more the thirst  
  
(115/3)

one who drinks  
from the brook of beauty  
gets drunk with intense pain  
  
even in mid-stream  
the thirst remains  
  
(115/4)

drink  
drink another cup  
let the thirst escalate  
  
give me a cupful of thirst  
with your own hands  
punhoon

let me quench my thirst  
with thirst

(115/5)

living on the river bank  
dunces die of thirst  
  
closer than the beloved  
is their breath  
  
yet the ignorant  
wail like fools

(116/9)

sasui  
with penury as your companion  
love's frenzy as your guide  
journey towards ketch

cross mountains  
accept tribulations  
avoid deliberations  
  
beware of azazeel  
your goal will draw near

(117/12&13)

do not revel in joy  
or wallow in grief  
  
do not speak lies  
or tell truths  
  
do not stay in bhambore  
or step out

do not fear death  
or love life

(117/14&15)

turn your gaze  
outwards

to

inwards

sajan

is

just

a glance away

(118/2)

sasui

your journey has just begun  
punhoon left ages ago

do not look for him

in the desert

take the route of those

who never move out

(120/1)

why drift in the wilderness?  
baroach is not far beyond  
says latif

only imposters set out  
on long journeys to ketch  
how should i reach ketch?  
tell me poet

with your heart  
full of ecstasy  
says latif

(121/16)

love is your  
eternal twin  
precious as musk  
inseparable from the soul  
never let it go

(121/1to3)

those with fleeting desire  
halt mid-way  
those afraid of affliction  
go astray

a formidable task  
my friend  
come if you're ready  
to sacrifice life itself

(122/1 to 3)

do not forbid me  
mother  
a wandering ascetic  
i want to be  
ears pierced  
clad in yogi's robes

(123/10)

i am a helpless woman  
punhoon  
keep your pledge

your word  
keeps me going

(123/13)

before pointing  
a finger at him  
keep your word first  
says latif

a hundred promises  
he may make  
a hundred promises  
he may break  
what can you do?  
such is the way of love

(123/14)

my feet  
sore with blisters  
my eyes  
brimming with tears  
exhausted  
i pray for him

how can i curse my love?  
god please help him

(124/19)

let death come  
mother  
i will not return home  
  
i'll perish  
following his footprints  
(124/24)

diving deep within  
i conversed with him  
  
no mountains to cross  
no need to reach ketch  
  
i myself was punhoon  
  
only as sasui  
did I feel grief  
(125/2)

a veil it was  
a screen  
she herself became punhoon  
says latif

she took the journey heroically  
crossed vindur  
here and now  
(125/4&5)

i lost  
my self  
  
i found  
him  
  
i was punhoon  
  
all knowledge is futile  
such delusion one suffers  
until you meet him  
(126/8)

to see his grandeur  
surrender the self

observe his beauty everywhere  
make it your goal  
to be with him forever

(126/11)

why search everywhere?  
nearer than your breath is he  
just remove the screen  
between you and him

(126/13)

martyrs of love  
need no shrouds

sasui enjoys a magnificent place  
in the realm of martyrdom

(128/6)

kindle the spark  
already there  
allow the blaze  
to rise

exist in  
non-existence

(132/17)

sasui awake  
stared at izraeel  
as if he were a messenger from punhoon  
  
when munkar and naheer appeared  
she asked them  
did you see my beloved's caravan?

(134/8&9)

this route  
this path  
these stones  
the poor women followed  
her shrieks echoed in the mountains

sasui  
the world applauds  
you dared to tread  
the tracks of the sardar

(135/14)

move on and on  
never retracing your steps  
even if you fail to find him  
derive joy from the journey itself  
says latif  
(136/2)

wind  
do not erase these footprints  
they guide me

storm  
these footprints i entrust to you  
do not let me down

(136/3)

exhausted  
sasui took the next step  
with that one step  
she leaped over the mountain

(136/8)

lend a ear to the ketchis  
hear them speak their riddles  
in total silence

be with them  
love will grow

(140/1)

lend a ear to the ketchis  
set your own bugle aside  
fathom their message  
hear their frequent calls

(140/2)

friend  
sometimes become all mouth  
sometimes all ears  
sometimes a knife  
sometimes a goat  
says latif

(140/5)

i am a blind woman  
aari's eyes are my eyes  
  
the trees along the road  
guide me to his abode  
to his shining face

(140/9)

call not  
without the urge to call  
walk not  
without the urge to walk  
burn not  
without the urge to burn  
weep not  
without the urge to weep

(140/11)

## Sur Maazoori



only false lovers tire  
searching for punhoon  
for true lovers  
mountains turn to plateaus

brahmin girl  
be ready  
to sacrifice your flesh  
as feast for the dogs of ketch

(147/1)

my relationship  
with the beloved  
is known to the world  
otherwise who would care  
for this slim brahmin girl?  
none would have recognized  
her anywhere in the world

(148/13)

friends  
become naked  
leave behind  
your greed

the beloved never meets  
the idle or lazy

(149/3)

burdened with possessions  
you'll find him  
far

lightened with nothingness  
you'll find him  
near

(149/7)

kill the mule  
with the dagger of nothingness  
says sayyad  
cast off desires  
walk carefree

(149/8)

mountain  
do not rise higher  
or shed tears  
lest i lose my trail

tree  
do not grow taller  
i need to climb you  
to see his footprints

(151/6&7)

let a million thorns pierce  
let my feet be cut by stones

i shall never wear shoes

only those  
who love their feet  
wear shoes  
says sayyad

sasui  
sacrifices all comforts  
disregards all customs  
for her beloved

(152/10&11)

die  
before you live  
heed this advice  
enjoy the fruits of existence

(153/1)

die and triumph  
give up doubts  
do not turn back my friend  
even if the footprints  
are not visible  
the journey itself is paradise

(153/4)

death cannot claim those  
who die before their death  
  
life renders death worthless  
for those who truly live life

(154/7)

life  
go cage others  
do not bother me  
  
death  
i'll follow you  
till eternity

(154/10)

helpless one  
use your head and mind  
not just hands and feet

search for him  
till you are alive

thousands  
of loved ones exist  
but none equals punhoon

(155/1&2)

stroll leisurely  
or stride rapidly  
even an iota of your destiny  
will not change

friends  
carry on courageously  
whatever is decreed  
will take place

(155/7&8)

if i scream loudly  
people call me mad

let them

i want my shrieks to be heard  
across distant lands

(156/12&13)

i cannot control myself  
tomorrow's promises be damned

meet me  
this very moment  
or  
kill me  
this very moment

my beloved

(157/1)

sasui  
an instant  
with punhoon  
is worth more  
than many years  
with any one else

(158/10)

the reed cut from the tree bleeds  
sasui remembers her dear ones

rain lashes the mountains  
but for her  
the drought continues

everything is in the lord's hands  
we can just lift ours in prayer

(159/19&20)

## GLOSSARY

Aaari	: Refers to Punhoon, prince of Ketch.
Aadesi	: Yogi.
Aasaa	: A morning raag of Hindustani music, belonging to the Aasaweri Thaat.
Alakh	: One who cannot be perceived by senses.
Aryani	: A lowly person.
Azazeel	: A fallen angel who disobeyed God.
Babiho	: A desert bird.
Baloach	: Resident of Baluchistan.
Beedo	: Red thread tied during marriage ceremony.
Bheri	: A big kettle drum.
Bilwal	: A raag sung in the first quarter of the day.
Bird	: The bird is symbolic of the soul in many eastern religious traditions.
Camel	: Symbolic of the fickleness of the human mind.
Cranes	: Representative of worldly people, while swans symbolize the ascetic.
Crow	: In Sindh, this bird was considered to be a messenger.
Dahar	: Once a prosperous desert valley near the Indus river; it dried up forcing the locals to migrate.
Dargah	: Holy shrine of a saint.
Dasara	: Refers to King Chanesar.

<b>Desi</b>	: A morning raag belonging to the Aasaweri Thaat.
<b>Doha</b>	: A two-line verse with a definite rhyme and rhythm structure.
<b>Dohag</b>	: Bad luck of separation from husband.
<b>Fakir</b>	: One who renounces.
<b>Gorakhnath</b>	: A saint.
<b>Haatim</b>	: Merciful person.
<b>Habib</b>	: Loved one.
<b>Haqiqat</b>	: Ultimate reality, truth.
<b>Hashmi</b>	: Benevolent king, who lived before Shah Latif's time.
<b>Hinglaj</b>	: A place of pilgrimage.
<b>Hoories</b>	: It is believed that the doer of good deeds enters heaven, where beautiful women serve cups of wine.
<b>Hote</b>	: Beloved.
<b>Hussein</b>	: A raag belonging to the Carnatic music.
<b>Ishk</b>	: Intense divine love that expels all worldly desires from heart.
<b>Izraeel</b>	: Angel of death.
<b>Jaajik</b>	: Musician who sings for money.
<b>Jaam</b>	: Refers to King Chanesar.
<b>Janio</b>	: Sacred thread of the Hindus.
<b>Kaatib</b>	: Writer.
<b>Kafir</b>	: Non-believer.
<b>Kalma</b>	: Holy verses.
<b>Kalyan</b>	: A raag sung late in the evening in both Hindustani and Carnatic music.

Kanda	: A thorny shrub with yellow flowers that dotted the Sindh landscape.
Kamode	: A soothing melody belonging to the Kalyan Thaat sung generally in the evening.
Karma	: The doctrine of transmigration of soul or reincarnation. A human being is freed from cycle of birth and death when action and reaction ceases.
Keenjhar	: A lake.
Ketch	: A city in Sindh.
Khambat	: Name of a port, also a melody.
Khori	: Wanderer in search of food, symbolizing the search for truth.
Laakha	: A strong man who protected women.
Lahutis	: Yogis.
Langotia	: Sanyasi.
Loi	: Garment made of coarse wool.
Madeena	: Holy place of the muslims.
Marifat	: The stage of revelation when the seeker gains spiritual knowledge
Mokhi	: Wine-seller. A symbol for Guru or Murshid who offers divine knowledge.
Munkar	: Angel who keeps account of our deeds and presents the same after death.
Murshid	: Spiritual guide or mentor.
Odes	: Inhabitants of Ketch who migrated due to adverse conditions.

<b>Rabab</b>	: A stringed instrument.
<b>Ramkali</b>	: A morning raag belonging to the Bhairav Thaat.
<b>Rasaha</b>	: Traveller.
<b>Sahar</b>	: Beloved.
<b>Sajan</b>	: Lover.
<b>Samo</b>	: King of Khambat
<b>Samudi</b>	: Sea-farers.
<b>Shariat</b>	: Divine law.
<b>Singhees</b>	: Hollow horn used as a musical pipe.
<b>Sri Raag</b>	: An early evening raag belonging to Purvi Thaat.
<b>Surando</b>	: A musical instrument
<b>Suttar</b>	: One who clothes the naked.
<b>Tariaqat</b>	: Spiritual path of the sufis.
<b>Urs</b>	: Celebration during the death anniversary of a saint.
<b>Vairaagis</b>	: Yogis.
<b>Vindur</b>	: The mountain that Sasui crossed to reach Ketch.
<b>Yaman Kalyan</b>	: A late evening melody belonging to Hindustani music.

## BIONOTES

Winner of the Sahitya Akademi Award, **Hari Dilgir** was an eminent Sindhi poet and scholar. He edited many anthologies of poetry and received several literary awards like Gaurav Puruskar, Priyadarshini Award and Indusind Award for lifetime contribution to Sindhi language.

Born in Pune, **Anju Makhija** has spent several years in Canada. An MA in Media from Concordia University, Montreal, she has worked in the fields of education, training and television. She writes poetry, plays and has worked on audio-visual scripts. *All Together*, a multi-media production won her an award at the National Education Film Festival, California. She has participated and won prizes in poetry and playwriting competitions organized by The British Council, The Poetry Society of India and the BBC.

**Padmashree Motilal Jotwani** is a renowned sufi scholar and has to his credit many books in Sindhi, Hindi and English.

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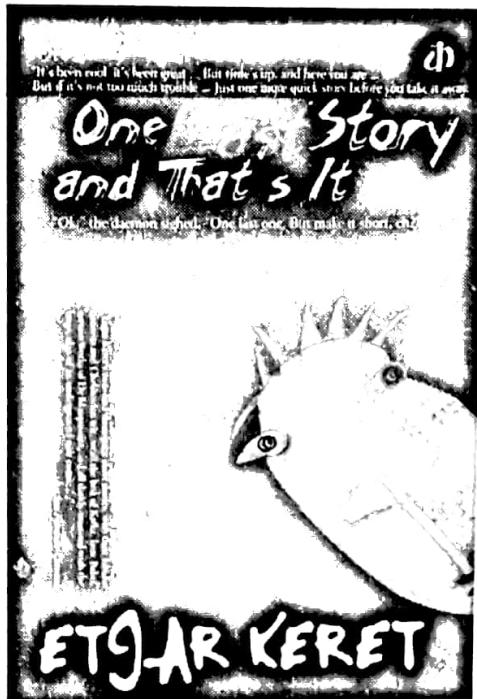


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We, the children and women of Govindpuri, a large slum cluster of more than 1,50,000 people, have come a long way in more than fourteen years with Katha. But there are excitements ahead. Small but sure steps towards self-confidence, self-reliance touched by the power of self-esteem. Many of us are working today to support our families in ways we could never have dreamt of! Many of us have finished our BAs and BComs from Delhi's colleges. We once didn't even dare to dream ... today dreams coming true, we talk of what Katha's goal of an uncommon education for a common good can help us all achieve. We are fun-loving dreamers-doers at Katha. And we'd like you to join us in our fight against poverty.

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Please send your cheque/DD in favour of Katha Resources to Educate a Child (REACH) Fund to Katha, A3, Sarvodaya Enclave, Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi 110017. For more details visit us at [www.katha.org](http://www.katha.org). Or write to us at [networking@katha.org](mailto:networking@katha.org).

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why search everywhere?  
nearer than your breath is he

just remove the screen  
between you and him

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*The Indian Express*

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